He is Omniscient
A ... on the Knowledge and Science of Islam
– 2 –

Knowing the Imams

Volume 1

The Infallibility of the Prophets and the Imams
Peace Be upon Them All

Allamah Sayyid Muhammad
Husayn Husayni Tihrani

Translated by
Rahim P. Dawlati and Salim Rossier

Editor
Sayyed Khalil Toussi

Series Editor
Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Great Books of the Islamic World

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'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusayni Ṭihrāni

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Note: While it is common in Persian or Arabic to place blessings on the Prophet or the Imams (you may find an "r" or something similar after the names of the Imams), it is not common practice in an English text. Readers should just say the phrase of blessings in their hearts when they see reference to the Prophet or Imams.

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He is cherished

Knowing the Imams

Volume 1

The sessions of the Month of Ramaḍān, from the beginning to the 14th of the month, 1391 AH

The necessity of the infallibility of the Messengers and the Imams, and of the superiority of the Guardians, is clearly expressed in these verses: *...and We appointed them leaders who guided [the people] by Our command, and We inspired them to perform good deeds, and to perform the prayer...and when his Lord tested Abraham with [His] Words [of Command], and he fulfilled them; He said: "I have appointed you as a spiritual leader for the people...We appointed them leaders who guided [the people] by Our command, and We inspired them to perform good deeds;* and *...so is someone who guides to the Truth worthier to be followed or someone who does not guide unless he himself is guided? What is the matter with you? How do you judge then?*

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Explanation of the Contents

The first lesson is based on the infallibility of the Prophets and the Imams, upon them be peace: the basic differences between Shi'ism and Sunnism; the Imam compared to the heart in the body; the necessity of the Infallible Imam in society; the infallibility of the Prophets as comprised of three stages: infallibility in receiving and announcing revelation and infallibility against sins; the debate between Hishām ibn Ḥakam and Amr ibn Ubayd on the necessity of the Imam in society; the mourning of all creatures at the martyrdom of the Master of Martyrs.

The second lesson is an explanation of heredity regarding infallibility: he basis of heredity is an invariable rule of God; the Prophet is the complete manifestation of the Divine Light entrusted to Adam; after the Prophet, the Divine Light and Truth were entrusted to Imam Ali, and then through him to the rest of the Infallible Imams; the traditions (*hadith*) concerning the reality of the Prophet and Ali before the creation of Adam; a commentary on the verse *...then We allowed some of Our worshippers, whom We had chosen, to inherit this Book;* who these chosen people are; narrations of Sunnis most learned about Imam Ali; the mourning of the birds and wild animals for Imam Ḥusayn; and the accepted visiting of his shrine on the first day of Rajab.

The third lesson is on the superior qualities of the chosen worshippers of God: sincerity in one's actions is the only means to reaching perfection; the attributes of the sincere in the Glorious Qur'an; Satan's inability to deceive the sincere in the struggle to praise God as He deserves; the consistency of this position according to the phrase *We knew You not as it is Your right;* the exemption from questioning and giving account regarding the Book and the Balance; the rewards of the sincere exceed their good deeds; that sincerity is equal to immunity from sin and having Divine protection; the usefulness of all three stages of infallibility for God's Messengers according to the verse: *...the Knower of the Unseen, and He never discloses the Unseen to anyone other than a Messenger with whom He is pleased;* concerning the venerable Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad and mother of the Commander of the Believers, upon him be peace; the eminence of the birth of Ali in the Holy House of the Ka'b.

The fourth lesson is about the necessary infallibility of the Prophets and Imams, upon them be peace; the moderate attributes of man; the particular knowledge of those who are close to the Divine Realm that has destroyed the inward roots of evil; three verses of the Qur'an mentioning the benefits of those closer to God; the early years of Ali growing up in the house of the Prophet; the relationship of Ali with the Prophet; the confession of Fāṭimah to Ali and his response.

The fifth lesson concerns infallibility as a gift: the power of infallibility is always a sign of being immaculate; verses of the Qur'an that speak of the infallibility of the Messengers; the Verse of Warning and the story of the Household; authentic documentation of the story of the Household; the story of the Household according to the orientalists; Ṭabarī's errors in recording the story of the Household; the Governorship of Ali being linked with the Unity of God, and the prophecy of the Prophet from the very beginning; how Ali was the close friend and supporter of the Prophet throughout the entire period of the Prophet's messengerhood.

The sixth lesson describes how the infallibility of the Prophets is not inconsistent with actions of their own choice: how the infallibility of the Prophets comes from God; the proof of infallibility in another verse of the Qur'an; that infallibility does not cause actions to be constrained; the Prophets are superior because of deeds of their own choice; "creation" means to become apparent, but not to be born and come into existence; the foundation of being is built upon the distinction of things; all great and gifted things move towards perfection; the perfection of every creature is due to its own actions; God expects the perfection of the world and of the person; in all their actions, miracles or otherwise, the Prophets had their own knowledge and authority; proving the infallibility of Imam Ali by his soul's being joined to the soul of the Prophet; the story of the *Laylat al-Mabit* and the self-sacrifice of Ali for the Prophet; Ali's bleeding feet while he migrated to Medina; God's being pleased before His angels by Ali's self-sacrifice for the Prophet.

The seventh lesson shows that the Imamate is above prophethood: the meaning of the Imam in the following verses: *And when his Lord tested Abraham with (His) Words (of Command) and he fulfilled them, He said: "I have appointed you as a spiritual leader for the people,"* and *We appointed from among them leaders to guide (people) at*

Our command, because they acted patiently and are convinced of Our signs; the guidance of creatures is with the Imam; the certainty of Ali's being an Imam and having governance; the story of Anas concerning Imam Ali's political authority; the persecution by the Quraysh and their deception of Ali.

The eighth lesson is about the Imam's genetic Guardianship (*wilāyah al-takwini*) of all people with the permission of God: on the Imamate's being more excellent than prophethood; the meaning of the Imam; the necessity of Divine Power in the Imam to govern; an interpretation of the verse *(Remember) the Day when We shall call forth all mankind along with whoever has led them; those who are given their books in their right hands will read their books and will not be wronged a single date-thread. And whosoever is blind to things in this [world] will be the same in the Hereafter, and will be more astray from the path*; the meaning of the received *hadith* that say that Ali is the Divider of (the people of) Paradise and Hell; the meaning of the "means" in the *hadith* of the Prophet; the poems of Sayyid Ḥimyari and Di'bil Khuzā'i that point to the *hadith* stating that Ali is the Divider of (the people of) Paradise and Hell.

The ninth lesson concerns the genetics of Guardianship: reward is for the virtue of actions, not for how they appear; certainty in the meaning of the "path"; different explanations of the *hadith* "No one is permitted to walk on the path until Ali gives him written permission"; clarification of the above *hadith*; comments on the poem of Ḥimyari.

The tenth lesson is on the need of a living Imam for assuring hearts: the root of substance, causality, and effectiveness in the regulation of existence; the effect of human companionship; the Imam's heart as the diffusion of knowledge; the Shi'a belief that the foundation of Islam is the Imamate; the Shi'a as possessors of kindness, sympathy, and mildness; Paradise as the manifestation of attributes and actions; the running rivers in Paradise; the water of the four rivers of Paradise (the river of milk, the river of wine, the river of honey, the water of ginger, and the spring of camphor; the water of Tasnim that runs under the feet of Imam Ali; the cupbearer of the water of the Kawthar; Ḥimyari's poem on the Kawthar and the cupbearer.

The eleventh lesson considers the meaning of revelation and charity in the way of the Imams: the meaning of the genesis revelation; the revelation of charity to the Imam; conditions of the certainty of the Imamate; the Imam's taking care of his being links him to God; the rising up of the Venerable Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn was not by the command of the Imam; the coexistence of motion and silence in the Imam; *hadith* concerning the unity of the souls of the Messenger and Ali; Ali's existing attributes; the removal of doubts that the attributes of governance are distinct from the Power of God.

The twelfth lesson concerns the necessity of infallibility in guidance to the Truth: the necessity of following the Truth; the need to follow the Infallible Imam is tantamount to following the Truth, and commentary on the verse *...so he who guides to the Truth*; the *hadith* of ibn 'Abbās that Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali; the cause of enmity about the caliphate of Imam Ali; 'Umar's confession on the status of Ali in Sunni *hadith.*

The thirteenth lesson is on guidance towards God and the conditions that a guide must have: the purpose of guiding to the Truth; the necessity of the Imam's having been guided to the Truth and its three conditions; commentary on the verse *...and My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers*; seven important questions regarding the Imamate; the superior virtues of Ali; the narrations concerning Ali as the best of mankind; the Ascension narrations concerning the political authority of Imam Ali; explanations of Gabriel in the shape of Diḥya concerning the political authority of Ali; the seven subjects on the issue of the Imamate; Abū Bakr's weakening of the caliphate; five faults in Abū Bakr's sermon; Abū Bakr's nine regrets at his death.

The fourteenth lesson concerns the necessity of following the most learned: the stable position of the Imamate among the offspring of Abraham until the Day of Resurrection; the certainty that *There is no deity except God*; the necessity of the Imam's being the most learned among the whole nation; destruction as a consequence of a nation that gives authority to an inept ruler; Imam Ali as the most learned among the nation; 'Umar's confession of the vast knowledge of Ali; Ibn 'Abbās's regret that they did not bring a piece of paper [on which to write his will] when the Prophet was on his deathbed; 'Umar's neglect of bringing paper and ink for the Prophet

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
Everlasting praise and endless gratitude is specified for God, the Honorable and Exalted, Who, in His vast Wisdom, created existence from nothing and clothed it with the garment of life.
Then, among those worlds of creations, He chose man to have great sensibility and wisdom, and honored him with responsibility and religious obligation.
As it is stated in the Qur'an:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا.

And We honored the children of Adam, and carried them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good and pure things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom We created, with a marked preference. (17:70)

Therefore, endless praise, benediction, and boundless honor belong to the instructing leaders among humanity who, by hoisting the banner of Divine praise, transfigured the hearts of men with the brightness of belief. They lit the torch of Unity and governorship in the souls of men so that through their great existing power and talent His command descends.

Especially the Holy Seal of the Prophets, Mohammad ibn 'Abdullāh, and his respected Guardian, the Master of the Inheritors, Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon them, who are the bearers of the Banner of Praise and the main possessors of the position of intercession; and also the immaculate Imams up to the Reminder of God on Earth, Hujjat ibn al-Hasan may God hasten his noble advent—he who is the perfect sign of the Divine Attributes. He is the manifestation of beauty, majesty, and all the signs of the Unity of Light, the Illumination of the Everlasting Light upon beings, the true Guardian of the Honorable and Exalted, and a means of blessing.

He is the ever-existing Master of the Faithful, a Divine reflection and a sign of God's Majesty; he is the shining pearl; he is the blissful Light of Unity that is cast over all the world; he is the divinely nominated Governor, the receiver of command from the source of Truth, and through him the light of existence from God effuses to all other entities in the realm of contingency.

In the realm of creation, the Imam is the perfect mirror of God's Beauty and Majesty and in the field of the *shari'a*; he is the receiver and interpreter of revelation and religion.

The matter of the Imamate and authority is most vital in human life, through which all man's abilities begin to grow; but unawareness of this and resistance to following the Truth means that abilities go astray and are ruined on the deviant path of desire and passion.

Therefore, God, the Honorable and Exalted, has honored me to allocate my time in the companionship of religious friends and bothers during the month of Ramaḍān, 1391 AH, to discuss the issues of the Imamate and Guardianship.

It was decided that our discussion would be based on verses of the Qur'an; however, because of the importance of the subject for the Sunni audience, through our discussion we decided to have a dialectical approach to the issues, to gain benefit from narrations (*hadith*) and historical facts, as well as certain narrations from the Shi'a school when required.

At first, we thought that we could complete the project during the month of Ramaḍān. However, although we worked hard throughout the month, Ramaḍān came to an end before we could complete a sixth of what we had intended.

With the favor and help of God, in my personal research at home I had the opportunity to compile a volume of what was discussed in our gathering.

Almost four years had passed since our discussions on the various topics, collecting relevant material about the Imamate, until in Ramaḍān 1395, once again God cast favor upon me, and I successfully embarked upon the unfinished discussion with my dear brothers and students.

At the end of Ramaḍān, we had covered another sixth of our discussion. As a result, during these two months of Ramaḍān we had completed and written one third of our discussion.

After a period of time, four volumes have now been completed and are ready to be studied, with the hope that God, the Exalted, will favor me so that I may finish the remainder.

All these discussions are expected to comprise twelve volumes, and include the complete subject of "Knowing the Imams" according to Islamic knowledge and understanding in approximately one hundred eighty lessons.

Although these lessons are concentrated on the Imamate, Guardianship and leadership, and infallibility of the twelve Imams,

the circumstances of prophecy and the necessary infallibility of the Messengers is also discussed. In fact, this is a complete discussion on the Imamate and the issue of prophethood, which may make it unnecessary for us to refer to other sources on this subject.

We would like to thank God for His great favor to us, that we, the humble, have been so courageous in fulfilling this difficult task. After years of struggle, we have completed the symposium and are now ready to present it to our brothers and sisters in religion.

So, praises and gratitude be to God, and our final appeal is that praise belongs to God, and may He bless Mohammad and his pure descendants.

Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusayni Ṭihrānī

Lesson One:

On the Infallibility of the Prophets and the Imams, Upon Them Be Peace

LESSON ONE

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be upon his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ.

[At first,] people were one community [but they gradually differed], and then Allah sent the Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners. And He sent down with them the Book with the Truth that it might judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. But none differed in it except in what they had imputed to it after the clear proofs had come to them, [and simply] out of envy amongst them. Then Allah by His leave guided those who believed to the truth of what they disagreed about, for Allah guides whomsoever He will to a straight path. (2:213)

The Basic Dispute between the Shi'a and the Sunnis

The main dispute between the Shi'a and the Sunnis is the question of Guardianship. The Shi'a belief is that an Imam must be infallible and chosen by God, while the Sunnis say that the Imams need not be infallible and that people may choose their own Imam and follow him.

The other continuing disputes between these two factions are minor in comparison, since this main difference concerning the Imamate has naturally affected the others. It seems that if this main dispute were resolved, and the two factions unanimously accepted one interpretation, then other minor misunderstandings would be settled or overlooked, and all Muslims would come together and be united.

Nowadays, by God's will and the assistance of the immaculate souls of His Guardians, we are thoroughly investigating this problem. We intend to unveil the question of the Imamate by means

of God's Book and the explicit texts (*nuṣūṣ al-ṣarīḥ*) of the Messenger, blessings be to him and his descendants, for surely,

بِحولِهِ وقوتِهِ ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العليّ العظيم.

With the power and the strength of Him, for there is no power and no strength except for Allah, the Most High, the Glorious. (2:213)

As a precise explanation of the foregoing verse, we mention some examples as an introduction.

The Imam as Analogous to the Heart in the Human Body

There are many organic mechanisms in the human body, and each one functions according to its assigned duty: the eyes are for seeing, the ears for hearing, the nose for breathing and smelling, the tongue for tasting, and the feet and hands for walking and holding things respectively, and each of the muscles functions by getting its energy from the heart.

The heart sends blood to every single organ in the body regularly, keeping them alive with refreshed blood. But if for a moment the heart stops functioning, this living organic matter changes into a dead substance and loses its value: the eyes do not see, the ears cannot hear, the hands do not move, and the feet become numb and die.

Thus, the value of this primary task of the heart is to supervise the organic mechanisms under its control. No one can say "I do not need a heart, because it neither sees nor hears, neither speaks nor writes," and so on. Such an assertion is wrong, because the eyes, ears, tongue, feet, and hands are useless without the power generated by the heart. Every instant the eye encounters numerous perils and external threats, as do the ears and the other organs. But the heart never neglects its duty, and always sends blood to the different organs, protecting them against enemies such as alien bacteria.

Therefore, under the direct supervision of the heart, the eyes and the ears are always active and alert, for the heart is the regulator and the main enlivening mechanism for the other organs.

On the other hand, it is the brain that is the center of thought and the regulator of all these organs. The eyes can only see by the reflection of light. An image of a certain thing reflects in the lens of the eye, but nothing comes of this until the brain receives the image

and analyzes it, thus interpreting what was clearly received by the eyes.

Therefore, there is nothing wrong with the eyes of those who are drunk, unconscious, or mad—their eyes may be quite perfect, and catch images and reflect them properly; but since the brain is addled, it cannot carry out its duty of interpreting the images, and in such cases, when the senses deliver messages to the brain, it cannot make out what they are or how they should be acted upon.

That is why, now and then, it might happen that a drunk takes his mother or sister for his wife, and is bent on having a sexual liaison with one of them. He may walk naked on the road without sensing that the road is the same one he always walks along. His bewilderment causes him to do this.

A drunk mumbles nonsense, drunkenly brawls, and acts rudely in the presence of gentle people; he does not care about eating filthy food and cannot resist dictating to others. While his vision, hearing, sense of taste, and other organs seem to be sound and functioning, they are not. This is because the control mechanism of the brain has been affected, and instead of analyzing things and being of assistance, it confuses them and ruins the entire system's proper function.

So the task of the brain mechanism is to observe all the surrounding organs, analyze them, and serve them. In the case of a drunkard or a madman, it is another story; as he has lost his keen sensibility, he does not have sound, reliable organs functioning properly.

In addition to mankind, animals also have brains and hearts, without which not a single animal, even a tiny cell, would be able to do its job properly and be active during the course of its life.

In the case of inanimate objects, it is the physical laws that unite them, as if there is a spirit that governs all entities. This is why, for example, scientists apply these physical laws and techniques in machinery, by setting up regulating tools and gadgets through which they can control and adjust the components.

When we first wind up a clock, the force of the spring is very strong, and it wants to hastily turn the tiny wheels; but later, when the spring loosens and loses strength, the gears turn more slowly. Therefore, an apparatus known as a pendulum is placed in the clock to adjust the motion, and regardless of whether the pressure of the spring is weak or strong, the clock runs regularly and shows the right time.

Without the regulating gauges in the motors running large factories, all the machines would be damaged or ruined. This is because, for example, when boilers are heated, they produce a great amount of steam, and if all the steam ran straight to the pistons, then the revolving wheels would run faster than intended and break down the main machines. Conversely, if the steam pressure is low, the machine slows down and stops. This is why excess steam is saved lest there be shortage of steam at some time. For this to operate properly, a regulating device is placed between the boiler and the pistons in order to deliver the due amount of steam to the pistons. When the steam is more than is needed, it automatically runs into a reservoir, which stops it from running into the engines; when the steam is less than what is needed, then it is obtained from the reservoir and runs to the engines. In this way, the engines run in a regulated fashion and work at a consistent speed.

In human society, there is a similar system for the exchange of energy, regulation of affairs, settlement of disputes among the people, avoidance of oppression, and guidance of the people to the ideal perfection, as well as to the benefit of the blessings of God in the right way. Otherwise society breaks down, and there can be no benefit from the tremendous riches of life.

The Necessity of the Immaculate Imam in Society

The regulator of the realm of human society is the Imam, who has positive faculties, right thoughts, and a strong mind in order to supervise all the affairs among nations, and to restore to them equality and discipline.

Now, if the Imam is liable to sin, as are the common people in society, and is afflicted by innumerable faults, or is similar to those who are capricious and pursue their passions, then can he bring amity and peace to the people, solve their problems, end disputes among them, return to them their rights, and encourage them to lead a good life? Or teach the people personally according to their merits, give them the right knowledge and facts, explain to them the secrets of the straight path to God, and point out the errors in their wayfaring toward the Truth?

Given these crucial responsibilities, the leader, the chief, and the Imam of society, must be infallible and free from sin and error, having profound [Divine] knowledge, a sympathetic heart, and a bright mind to receive unseen Divine help and holy confirmation, and above all, to know the circumstances and actions of every individual.

Some Sunnis believe in the infallibility of the Prophets, while some take it less seriously, and grant them a certain amount of infallibility. On the other hand, some people totally reject the idea that the Prophets are infallible and that they are immaculate and free from sin. However, the Shi'a believe that the basic condition for a Prophet is his sinlessness and infallibility, and that is why they believe that the Imams are also free from both error and sin.

Three Aspects of the Infallibility of the Prophets

To prove this point, we have chosen from the Qur'an some verses about the infallibility of the Prophets, which we then discuss with regard to the Imams.

Our claim concerning the infallibility of the Prophets has three aspects, the first of which is the receiving of revelation. When a revelation is being sent into the heart of a Prophet, he must be in a state free from error and receive the revelation just as it is sent down to him. He should neither add to it nor omit any of it, and his heart should hold the revelation sound and intact as it is, without altering it according to his own judgment.

The second aspect concerns how to deliver the revelation to the people. The Messenger should deliver the revelation as he has received it. He should make no mistakes in properly carrying out his duty; he should neither forget the revelation, nor increase it, nor reduce it, nor distort it.

The third aspect is the question of faults and sin. That is, he should not do anything in either word or action contrary to his servitude to his Master, or derogatory to the respect due to Him, that would cause disgrace.

These three aspects can be summed up in one brief sentence: this is a command from God to an infallible being to save him from sin and error.

However, of these three aspects, random errors are those that a man commits with his senses, and basic errors concern loss and gain; moral soundness is assumed, and corruption does not come into the Shi'a and Sunni discussions.

However, there are some verses in the Qur'an concerning these three aspects of infallibility, such as the following:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ.

[At first,] people were one community [but they gradually differed], and then Allah sent the Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners. And He sent down with them the Book with the truth that it might judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. But none differed in it except in what they imputed to it after the clear proofs had come to them, [and simply] out of envy amongst them. Then Allah by His leave guided those who believed to the truth of what they disagreed about, for Allah guides whomsoever He will to a straight path. (2:213)

This verse tells us that the purpose of sending the Prophets, the descent of Revelation, and the Book is to invite people to the Truth, and when people verbally dispute or act against one another's belief, to guide them to the right path.

This is the aim of the creation of the Prophets, and God never makes mistakes or fall into error, as this verse says:

لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنسَى

He neither errs nor forgets. (20:52)

And He also achieves His goal, for there is no obstacle in His way, as this verse says:

إِنَّ اللهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

Allah accomplishes His purpose, for indeed, Allah has granted everything in due proportion. (65:3)

And this munificent verse states:

وَاللهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ

And Allah is powerful in His affairs. (12:21)

Thus, it is necessary for the protection of the revelation when it is being revealed, and when it is being propagated, to keep the Prophets immune from sin and error. According to the following verse, if a Prophet were negligent at the time of receiving a revelation, then the purpose of his prophethood would not be

fulfilled, because the main purpose of revelation is to invite people to righteousness, not simply to pronounce it:

وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ

And He sent [His] Book with the truth that it might guide people concerning that over which they had differed. (2:213)

According to the verse *He neither errs nor forgets*, the following assertions cannot be accepted: that there were mistakes by the Prophets, or that when the revelation was being sent an error occurred, or that although the Prophet's aim was to invite people to the truth, at the time of propagating he was forgetful. Or even if his purpose was to invite people to the truth and he never made a mistake, but some external cause made him fail to carry out the command of God; all such things are impossible, since, as the Qur'an states, *Allah dominates His command* and *Allah embraces His command*.

According to these brief explanations, surely God protects His Prophets against making mistakes when receiving and propagating a revelation. He purifies and secures their hearts in such a way that when revelation comes down into their hearts, nothing but the Truth has power over them, and there remains no worry or darkness in their hearts to lure them to distort it.

Hence, this is the main meaning of infallibility at the time of receiving and propagating revelation.

But the import of the above verse can be understood from another angle. That is, if a Prophet were to make a mistake and commit a sin, he would thereby declare his inefficiency, because a wise man thinks twice before acting, and does whatever he thinks is right. Thus, if he were to commit a sin while saying the opposite, there is a contradiction, because his speech would be counter to his action. With his speech he would be telling people one thing, but his action would demonstrate the opposite.

It is clear that contradictory propaganda cannot be right, because one thing invalidates the other, and God has sent the Prophets to broadcast the Truth, not to speak in contradictions. He protects them against sin, because infallibility is intended for them, and the main objective is to broadcast the revelations.

With this brief explanation, it becomes clear that the above verse is about infallibility, a state for receiving and broadcasting revelation, free of the condition of sin.

The Imams, who are also the protectors of the religion, the explainers of God's commands, and the supervisors of the laws of nations, are as the hearts and thoughts of the Prophets; and in this sense they are no different from the Prophet. The only exception is that the Prophet is the bearer of the religion and the Book, and the Imams safeguard and propagate it, but all causes and proofs concerning the Prophets hold true for them.

In the book of *Kāfi*[1] and the book of *al-Ḥujjat* by Kulayni in which he narrated from Ali ibn Ibrahim, and he from his father, Ḥassan ibn Ibrahim ibn Ya'qūb, it is written:

> Some of the companions among them—Ḥamrān ibn A'yun and Muhammad ibn Nu'man, Hishām ibn Sālim and Ṭayyār, as well as a strong young man called Hishām ibn Ḥakam[2]—were in the presence of Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.
>
> The Imam stated to Hishām ibn Ḥakam: "O Hishām, are you not going to inform us about the exchange which took place between you and Amar ibn Ubayd?"
>
> Hishām said: "O son of the Messenger of Allah, your status is so great that I cannot say a word in your presence or speak of my discussion; I feel ashamed before you, and my tongue is unable to utter a word!"
>
> The Imam said: "Whenever we ask you to do something, you should carry it out straight away."

The Dispute of Hishām ibn Ḥakam with Amr ibn Ubayd

This being so, Hishām started to speak as follows:

> The story of Amr ibn Ubayd and his presence in the mosque of Basra and his conversation with the people was a good lesson which has since then been very unpleasant for me. I left [my home] and came to Basra to meet and have a discussion with him.
>
> It was Friday when I entered the Mosque of Basra and saw a circle of people gathering in one place, and among them, Amr ibn Ubayd was answering questions from the people.
>
> Amr ibn Ubayd had wound a black mantle around his waist as a belt, and had another as his clothing, and was busy speaking. I asked the people to let me through to get closer to him. They let me pass, and I walked to the front of the people and knelt down close to Amr ibn Ubayd. Soon after I said: "O sage, I am a stranger in this town. Would you let me ask you a question?" and Amr answered: "Yes."
>
> I asked: "Do you have eyes?"
>
> He said: "O son, what is this question then? You see that I have eyes, so what do you ask about?"

I said: "My question is just this, now would you answer it?"

He said: "O son, do ask, even if your question is nonsense!"

I said: "Do answer my question."

He said: "Ask it."

I said: "Do you have eyes?"

He said: "Yes."

I asked: "What do you do with your eyes?"

He said: "I see the colors and the people with them."

And I asked: "Do you have a nose?"

He said: "Yes."

I asked: "What do you do with your nose?"

He said: "I smell odors with my nose."

I asked: "Do you have a mouth?"

He said: "Yes."

I asked: "What do you do with your mouth?"

He said: "I taste food with my mouth."

I asked him: "Do you have ears?"

He said: "Yes, I do."

I asked: "What do you do with your ears?"

He said: "I hear sounds with my ears."

I asked: "Do you have a brain with the power of perception and thought?"

He said: "Yes, I do."

I asked: "What do you do with it?"

He said: "I distinguish with it whatever comes to my senses."

I asked: "Are these senses not independent of your power of perception?" I said: "Then how does it come to be that they are in need of the brain while each of them is safe and sound?"

He said: "O my son, when these organs doubt what they see, smell, taste, or hear, they refer it to the brain, and it is the brain that distinguishes what it is; and while accepting the right answer, it rejects the wrong and unwanted ones."

Hishām continued:

Then I told him, "Thus, it must be that God has created the heart and the brain to distinguish the doubts of the senses."

He said: "Yes."

I said: "Then a man needs a brain, for his senses make mistakes."

He said: "Yes, they do."

Then I said: "O Abā Marwān [Amr ibn Ubayd], God, the Blessed and Exalted, has not left the senses there on their own, but has set up a leader [the brain] to control them and to fortify whatever comes to them, in order to separate the good from the bad, to accept what is right and reject what is unneeded. Now, according to this, how would God

leave His creatures on their own, wandering in doubt and being led astray, without assigning a leader to guide them, for a man like you assigns an Imam to remove the doubts that your senses make?"

Upon hearing my words, Amr ibn Ubayd kept silent and spoke no more. Then he turned to me and asked: "Are you Hishām, the son of Ḥakam?"

I said: "I am from Kūfa."

And he said: "In that case, you are certainly Hishām."

Then he stood up and embraced me, and soon after moved away and seated me in his place. He spoke no more and kept silent in front of me until I left the meeting.

Hishām said:

Imam Ṣādiq was delighted with the tone of my discussion, so he smiled and said: "O Hishām, who made you speak in such a way?" I said: "I learned this way of speaking from you, the Venerable One." And then: "I always adjust my sayings on the basis I need."

The Venerable One said: "By God, this kind of dialogue is written in the texts of Abraham and Moses."[3]

Since the Imam is as the brain and the heart for the entire body, his sensory system is affected by the happiness or sorrow of every single creature.

In the *Khasā'is al-Kubrā*, Suyūṭī says:

واخرج الحاكم والبيهقي وابو نعيم عن الزهري قال: لَمَّا كَانَ صَبَاحُ يَوْمٍ قُتِلَ عَلِيّ بن ابيطالبٍ، لَمْ يُرْفَعْ حَجَرٌ فِي بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ إِلَّا وُجِدَ تَحْتَهُ دَمٌ.

واخرج ابو نعيم من طريق الزهري عن سعيد بن المسيب قال: صَبِيحَةَ يَوْمٍ قُتِلَ عَلِيّ بْنُ ابيطالبٍ، لَمْ تُرْفَعْ حَصَاةٌ مِنَ الأَرْضِ إِلَّا وَتَحْتَهَا دَمٌ عَبِيطٌ.[4]

Al-Hākim, al-Bayhaqi, and Abū Nu'aym narrated from al-Zuhari: "On that morning when Imam Ali was murdered, every pebble and stone from across the land could be seen to have fresh blood running under it."[4]

And Abū Nu'aym through the above-mentioned chain from Sa'īd ibn Musayyib, narrated: "That morning at dawn, when Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib was murdered, no pebble was taken from the ground but there was thick blood beneath it."[5]

Shaykh Ṣadūq and Amāli have narrated from the *Ilal al-Sharāye* that Jibilla Makiyyah said:

I heard Maytham Tammār say:

> By God, this nation will murder the son of their Messenger on the tenth of Muharram; and then, the enemies of God will call that day "the day of blessing." This is an affair that has passed through the knowledge of God and is inevitable; and because of the promise that Imam Ali has made with me, I have learned it. He told me that all the creatures would cry for the son of the Messenger—even the beasts in the desert, the fish in the sea, and the birds high in the sky.
>
> The sun, moon, stars, sky, and the earth, as well as the believers among men and *jinn*, and all the angels in the Heavens and Paradise, the treasurers of Paradise, and Mālik, the guardian of Hell, the guardian angels and the upholder of the firmament and the sky—all of them will cry for him, and at that moment, blood and ashes will rain.

Then Maytham said: "God's curse is needed upon the murderers of Ḥusayn (as), as it is with those unbelievers who have chosen other gods along with Almighty God, as well as the Jews, Christians and the Magi."

Jibilla relates:

I said: "O Maytham! Why would people call the day when Ḥusayn was murdered 'the day of blessing'?"

At that moment, Maytham wept and said:

> According to a false narration that they have invented, they believe that the Day of Ashura is the day when God accepted the repentance of Adam. However, God accepted the repentance of Adam in the month of Dhi al-Hajja. They believe it was then that God accepted David's repentance, while his repentance was accepted in the month of Dhi al-Hajja. And they believe it was then that God saved Jonah from the stomach of the whale, whereas He brought him out from the whale in Dhi al-Gha'da. And they believe that Noah's Ark reached the coast on that day, while the Ark settled on the coast on the eighteenth of Dhi al-Hajja. They also believe that God divided the sea on that day for the Children of Israel [to cross], while this happened in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal.

Then Maytham said:

> O Jibilla, know that there is much honor for Ḥusayn ibn Ali, the Master of the Martyrs, and his companions on the Day of Resurrection. O Jibilla, when you notice the sun turning as red as fresh blood, then you will know that they have slain your master Ḥusayn.

Jibilla said: "One day I left home, and when I caught sight of the walls they had turned red—as red as blood. It was then that I screamed and wept, crying: "By God, now they have slain our master Ḥusayn ibn Ali."[6]

Lesson Two:
The Main Explanation of Heredity in Infallibility

LESSON TWO

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be upon his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ
بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ

Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen; but there are among them some who wrong their own selves; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds; that is the highest Grace. (35:32)[7]

The laws of heredity are so fundamental that they must be taken into deep consideration in the study of humanity, animals, and inanimate creatures. Up until now, many beneficial results have been achieved in this way, and it can therefore be said to be an inconvertible Divine rule.

Investigation regarding humans shows that by the joining of the mother and father, there is a transmission of certain specific characteristics to the embryo of a child, which proves the point regarding the human being.

A tiny sperm of a man incorporates the entirety of his being and qualities compressed alive and active. It is activated by being placed in the special container of the mother's womb, and then appears as a complete but tiny being that inherits material, ethical, and spiritual qualities from the mother and father.

Not only does a child inherit his skin color, the quality of his various organs, and the formation of his bones from his parents, but every single drop of blood, and each tiny microscopic blood cell, is similar to those of the parents. They are so alike that if there is doubt about the child's father, by analysis of the blood the father can be recognized.

In fact, the child is like a branch produced by the main tree of the father, and has the same qualities.

As well as the eyes, nose, ears, heart, stomach, and whole skeleton, a child inherits from its parents microscopic elements, and even the gene of an illness is transferred from ancestors to new generations. If a disease does not transfer to the first or second generation, it is nonetheless still there, and passes through its interior course until the right time to emerge in an unfortunate generation.

These traces and qualities of the father not only transfer to his sperm, but are also apparent in all his blood cells. It could be said that in every tiny piece of a body there exists a complete, intelligent human being, and if conditions were right they would appear as a whole being. In other words, there is not only a complete human being in any sperm cell, which develops after being in its proper place in the womb, but in terms of heredity, there exists the same complete being in each blood cell.

Although so far they have not been able to fertilize these cells with the cells of a woman outside the womb to produce babies, there are no rulings against it and many positive reasons to do it. It seems possible that in the future science will be able to do this in practice, and by fertilizing the male and female cells produce new babies outside the womb, so that millions of babies can be produced by one man and woman.

This is simply because all the qualities of a person affect the main hereditary features, and one tiny portion represents the whole person. It is the same with agriculture, and heredity is proven not only by planting a tree in the soil, but also by grafting a part of the branch of a certain tree to another, which at the right time then produces fruit. All this process happens because the grafted piece that is planted has all the qualities of the root, trunk, and leaves inside it. When it is joined to the next tree, the case is the same: the sprout of the graft takes the trunk of another tree as the womb that provides for it and starts growing, in the meantime securing its own qualities therein.

مَامِن دَآبَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

Indeed, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but He grasps it by the forelock. Verily my Lord is on a straight path. (11:56)

In addition to physical characteristics, a child even inherits thoughts, behavior, and moral attitudes. Through the sperm, qualities are transferred into the new-born child, and combined with the mother's egg, the qualities of both parents transfer to the child.

Without force or interference a child turns out to be brave if his parents are brave; if they are weak, the child also is weak; and when they are generous or mean the result is the same. Likewise if they are forgiving, then the child is also forgiving.

Wise parents create wise children, while if they are dull, their children will be like them. In short, in his behavior and nature a child takes after his parents, who are the cause of their good or bad products.

It may happen that the child of a wise man is dull, or that a dull man's child is wise, but this amounts to the same thing: that the heredity has remained dormant for a period and then reappeared in a particular generation.

The main features of heredity are also seen in animals. A wolf gives birth to a wolf-cub, a sheep has a lamb, and a lion its own cub. This goes on generation after generation, with physical and spiritual attitudes found in the newly born.

It is the same with vegetation: jasmine produces jasmine, and a rose produces roses of the same color, shape, and smell. An apple never grows on a pear tree, even over a long period. This sums up the main hereditary features within existence, and this will continue the same forever.

فَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا.

So no change will you find in Allah's way of practice, nor will you find any alteration in Allah's practice. (35:43)

The principle of heredity has secured its stability in all walks of life, and its established existence is above all apparent in spirituality and the Divine Secrets.

God created the father of mankind (Adam) and assigned him as His vicegerent, filling his heart with the Light of His Beauty. He strengthened his wisdom, widened his chest, and expanded his heart so that he could embrace the knowledge of the universe, to learn the names of the creatures, and to tear apart the veils of illusion and fulfil his exalted position within creation:

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِندَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

...in a worthy abode in the presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent. (54:55)

He would have a secure position, learn the secrets of the Unveiled, and converse with the angels, abiding in the safety of the Divine Realm with his heart a host for the illuminating Attributes and Names of the Excellent Beloved, and be able to see God's Embracing Power, Knowledge, and Being in every single thing. He would be able converse silently with God so as to reach the station mentioned in the following verse:

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى
فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى.

He was taught by one Mighty in Power, endued with Wisdom, for He appeared in stately form while He was in the highest horizon. Then He drew near and came down, and was at a distance of two bows' length or even nearer. Then He revealed to His slave that which He revealed. (53:5–10)

And then, after the four stages of his journey pass away, to be as a reflecting mirror of God:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

And He taught Adam all the names. (2:31)

In the beginning when God created Adam, He placed His Light within him, according to the following:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

...and when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I am surely assigning a vicegerent on the earth." (2:30)

Adam took his position at this unique and precious station in the world. He soared next to the Treasure of the Divine Secret of the Most High and received a boon.

Then, of necessity the principle of heredity passed to the children of Adam, that is, the Prophets. Each of them came to prominence with his own moral perspective and possessed the Light according to his capacity:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ.

Those apostles We endowed with gifts, some above others, and some to whom Allah spoke, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs, and supported him with the Holy Spirit. (2:253)

This was so until the Seal of the Prophets and Master of Messengers, Mohammad ibn 'Abdullāh appeared. That Light—the main heredity that had been dormant in the loins of the fathers—became active and appeared, and then without fail began to illuminate.

Therefore, the religion is complete and is the abolisher (*nāsikh*) of all religions and creeds of the past, and it will remain so until the Day of Resurrection. This is because of the openness of his soul and the capacity of his blissful heart. The Light was divided in two, part of it transferred to his descendants through Fāṭimah, and part of it remaining with the Prophet. From them it passed to their offspring. Thus it is mentioned (in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*) that the Prophet said:

إِنَّ اللهَ جَعَلَ ذُرِّيَّةَ كُلِّ نَبِيٍّ فِي صُلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ ذُرِّيَّتِي فِي صُلْبِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ.

God assigned the offspring of the Prophets, and He has assigned my descendants from Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.[8]

Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal has narrated from Salmān in *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah*[9] the following:

يَقُولُ: كُنْتُ أَنَا وَعَلِيٌّ نُورًا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللهِ تَعَالَى قَبْلَ أَنْ يُخْلَقَ آدَمُ بِأَرْبَعَةَ عَشَرَ أَلْفَ عَامٍ فَلَمَّا خَلَقَ اللهُ آدَمَ قَسَّمَ ذَلِكَ النُّورَ جُزْئَيْنِ جُزْءٌ أَنَا وَجُزْءٌ عَلِيٌّ اخرجه احمد فى المناقب

I heard the Messenger of God, blessings be to him and his descendants, say: "Ali and I were a unique light in the presence of God, the Highest, for fourteen thousand years before He created Adam. Then when God created Adam that light was divided in two: one part of it was me and the other became Ali."[10]

And also in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, it is narrated by 'Uthmān ibn Affān from the Prophet that God had told him:

خُلقتُ أنا وعَليٌّ مِن نورٍ واحدٍ قبلَ أن يخلُقَ اللهُ آدمَ بأربعةِ آلافِ عامٍ فلمّا خلقَ اللهُ آدمَ رَكّبَ ذلكَ النّورُ فِي صُلبِهِ فلَم يَنزِل شَيئاً واحداً حَتّى افتَرقنا فِي صُلبِ عبدِ المُطّلِبِ، فَمِنّي النُّبوّةُ وفِي عليٌّ الوَصيةُ.

God, the Most High, created the unique light of Ali and me for about fourteen thousand years before creating Adam, the father of man. When He created Adam, He placed the light in his loins intact, where it remained generation after generation until it divided in the loins of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, wherefrom half came to me, and the other half to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. It was then that prophethood was consigned to me and the Imamate was assigned to Ali.[11]

The historian Amin Ḥusayn ibn Ali Mas'ūdi has a significant narration in the *Murūj al-Dhihab* from Ali about the beginning of creation and the light of Mohammad, and the transference of that light to the lower realms. The narration ends with the creation of the angels and Adam.

ثُمّ نبّهَ آدمَ عَلَى مُستَودِعِهِ، وكَشَفَ لَهُ [عَنْ] خَطَرِ مَا ائتَمَنَه عليه، بعدَ ما سمّاهُ اماماً عندَ الملائكةِ، فكانَ حظُّ آدمَ مِنَ الخيرِ مَا آواهُ مِن مُستودعِ نورنا، ولَم يَزَل اللهُ تعالَى يخبأُ النورَ تحتَ الزمانِ إلَى أن فَضّلَ محمداً صلّى اللهُ عليه (و آله) وسلّم فِي ظاهرِ الفَترات.

فدَعا النّاسَ ظاهراً وباطناً، وندَبَهم سرّاً وإعلاناً، واستدعَى عليَهِ السّلام التّنبيهَ عَلَى العَهدِ الّذي قَدّمَه إلَى الذّرِ قبلَ النّسلِ

فَمَن وافَقَهُ وقَبَسَ مِن مصباحِ النورِ المُقدِمِ، اهتَدَى إلَى سَرْوِ واستَبانَ واضحُ أمرِهِ، ومَن ابلَستهُ الغَفلَةُ، استَحَقَّ السَّخَطَ

ثُمّ انتَقَلَ النّورِ إلَى غَرائِزِنا، وَلَمَعَ فِي أنمّتنا فنَحنُ أنوارُ السمآءِ وأنوارُ الأرضِ، فَبِنَا النَّجَاةُ، وَمِنّا مَكنُونُ العِلمِ، وَإلَينَا مَصيرُ الأمور،

وبِمَهدِيّنا تَقطَعُ الحُجَجُ، خاتمةُ الأئمةِ، ومُنقِذِ الأمّةِ، وغايةِ النُّورِ، ومَصدَرِ الأمُورِ

فَنَحنُ أفضلُ المَخلُوقِينَ، وأشرَفُ المُوَحّدِينَ، وحُجَجُ ربِّ العَالَمِين.

فَلَيهنَأنا بالنِعمَةِ مَن تَمَسّكَ بولايتِنا، وَقَبَضَ عَلَى عُروَتِنا.

Later on he says:

Then God informed Adam of what He had deposited with him, and He unveiled the hidden greatness and prominence of that deposit (*wadi'ah*) to him. This was after Adam was introduced to the angels as

the Imam and invested with the Imamate. So the gift to Adam of God's Mercy and Grace was so much that God deposited and condescended within him [Adam] Our Light. God accordingly kept the Light secret for a long period of time until He revealed it in the creation of Mohammad, when the world was in need of a Prophet. The people were inwardly and outwardly invited to this Prophet and his religion, and he informed them in accord with what they had declared in the *'Alam al-Dhar*[12] and accordingly invited the people to that realm.

Those who agreed with the Prophet lit their flames with this illuminating Light and drew benefit from his manifest commands, and they found their way to the secret of his reality. But those who were neglectful doubted upon seeing this, for they were deserving of his wrath.

It was then that Light appeared in our natures and illuminated our Imams. Therefore, we are the light of the Heavens and the earth, and salvation will be through us; and the hidden sciences and knowledge will be issued by us and everything will return to us.

And by the reappearance of our Mahdī, all disputes and challenges will be cut off and ended; he is the seal of the leaders and Imams; he is the savior of the nations and the final Light, and the central mediator.

So we are the best of creatures and superior, and of the noblest of all religions. We are the Divine evidence and the proofs of the Creator of the worlds. Therefore, may bliss be upon those who are blessed by God—those who have clung to our Guardianship and held fast to the hand of our Guardian.

Then Mas'ūdi said:

This *hadith* is narrated by the most revered Abī 'Abdullāh Ja'far ibn Mohammad, and was narrated by his father Mohammad ibn Ali from his father, Ali ibn Ḥusayn, as spoken by Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, may God honor him.[13]

Mas'ūdi also said:

I have seen in many books on history and genealogy that when Adam heard an invisible voice alerting him of the death of his son Abel, and his sorrows over the past and the future increased, God inspired him with the words:

فاوحى الله اليه: إنّي مُخرجٌ منك نُورى الذى به السلُوكُ فى القَنَوات الطّاهِرة، والأرُومَات الشّريفَه، واباهى بها الأنوار، واجعلهُ خاتم الأنبياء وأجعلُ آله خِيار الأئمة الخُلفاء.

I shall take my Light from within you—the Light that shall be placed in the pure loins of the noble and respected descendants from whom I shall choose the best leaders, caliphs and Imams.

واختمُ الزمانَ بمُدَّتِهم، وأغصُّ الأرضَ بدعوَتِهم، وانشُرُها بشيعَتِهم.
فشمِّر، وتطهَّر، وقدِّس، وسبِّح واغشَ زوجَتَكَ على طهارةٍ منها.
فإنَّ وديعتي تتنقلُ منكما إلى الولد الكائن منكما

And I shall set the turning of the wheel of life and Divine governance through them. I shall so fill the earth with their call that no place will fail to hear it. I shall furnish the earth for their followers to abide in and walk on.[14]

O Adam, now prepare, remain pure, praise and glorify your God, and approach your wife and have pure and honest contact with her. It is because My Trust that is deposited with you will be transferred to your child.

Now that the subject matter is clear, let us interpret and comment on the following verse and consider what this heredity is:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

Then We gave the Book as inheritance to those of Our slaves whom We had chosen. (35:32)

The discussion will be on two issues: the first considers what "the Book" means here, and the second concerns those whom God entrusted with the Book.

There is no doubt that the Book in question is the Glorious Qur'an, because before the above verse is the following:

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ

As for that which We inspire in you of the Book, it is the Truth confirming that which was (revealed) before it; for Allah is indeed the Observer, Seer of His slaves. (35:31)

This verse is directed to Mohammad, and the Book which has been revealed to him is the Qur'an.

Immediately after this verse it is said: *Then We gave the Book as inheritance to those whom We chose of Our servants,* and it becomes clear that this is the same Qur'an. However, it is obvious that the meaning of "this Qur'an" is not the written Book that was revealed to them, but the real meaning of the Qur'an. In the same way that the Prophet was inspired by Gabriel, these "chosen worshippers"

also received a revelation in the same way, described in terms of secrets and favors, *which none touch but the purified* (56:79), and:

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

and:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic that you may understand. And verily it is in the Mother of the Book [the Preserved Tablet] with Us, sublime and exalted. (43:3–4)

It was sublimely inspired in their hearts in a manner that was appropriate for them.

The next part is rich with delightful narrations from the venerable Imam Mohammad Bāqir and the revered Imam Ja'far Sādiq concerning the chosen worshippers of God and descendants of the Messenger through Fāṭimah as mentioned in the following verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

Indeed, Allah did choose Adam and the family of Abraham and the family of Imrān above the world. (3:33)

This indicates the place of the family and descendants of Abraham.

Apart from this, since the beginning of Islam up to the present time, no one has claimed to be more expert on the Qur'an than Ali and the Infallible Imams, and successive narrations by Sunni scholars agree that Imam Ali was the most learned concerning God's Book.

Surely then, God's chosen worshippers to whom the Qur'an has been entrusted are the Imams.

In addition, according to successive Shi'a and Sunni narrations, the Messenger having introduced the Qur'an to his descendants proves that the "chosen worshippers" are the offspring of the Prophet:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّىٰ يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ

I leave with you two great and precious things: one is the Book of God and the other my family, that is, my offspring. These two will not separate until they come to me by the Kawthar [a fountain in Paradise].[15]

In addition to narrations mentioning the knowledge of Imam Ali, there is one from Umm Salamah that says that the Prophet said:

عليٌ مع القرآنِ والقرآن مع علي

Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali.

There is also the narration:[16]

أنا مدينةُ العلمِ وعليٌ بابُها

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.[17]

There are other narrations about the knowledge of Ali that prove that he was heir to the Book of God through the Prophet.

فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are lukewarm and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by God's leave. (35:32)

However, when it is said (35:32), it is clear that this means the very "Companions of the Right," the "Companions of the Left," and those who are "the Foremost," and it is obvious that the chosen people are those who are foremost in doing good.

The pronoun "of them" refers to "Our worshippers" with no modality. This indicates that all the worshippers are divided into three groups, but only "those who are foremost in doing good" are the real chosen ones who have inherited the Book. And the pronoun "them" in:

اصطفينا من عبادنا الذين

This refers to "those whom We have chosen from Our worshippers."

This means therefore that the three groups equally inherit the Book, even though the real inheritors of the Book would be the third

group. There is no problem if the inheritor of the Book is certain and the nature of heredity is defined, as in the following:

وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ

...and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit the Book. (40:53)

This means that God gave the Torah to the Children of Israel as their heritage, even though it was specifically sent to Moses. However, since Moses was among the Children of Israel, its being sent to the Children of Israel amounts to the same thing.

And "wronging themselves" refers to those Muslims who do wrong, since otherwise it would point to "the chosen ones." It cannot mean either "the Companions of the Left" or "the Companions of the Right," but basically those who are fundamentally deficient.

However, the main discussion indicates that it is Ali and the other Imams who are the chosen ones—as clearly stated in the texts from the authentic narrators—and that they are the guardians and protectors of God's Book.

The inheritor and protector of the Qur'an must be one who is comparable to the Prophet, whose heart is as vast as his in order to save and preserve it.

Here we can refer to some of the narrations mentioned by the greatest scholars so that Ali's station becomes clear.

In the *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah* it is narrated by 'Abdullāh Anṣāri that the Holy Prophet said:

كَفُّ عَلِيٍّ كَفِّي

Ali's hand is my hand.[18]

It is clear that activities such as giving, receiving, writing, fighting, and many others are carried out by using the hands. In such cases all the senses are concentrated on them.

It is also narrated by Abū Bakr that the Prophet stated:

يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ، كَفِّي وَكَفُّ عَلِيٍّ فِي الْعَدْلِ سَوَاءٌ

O Abū Bakr, Ali's hand and mine are as one.[19]

And again elsewhere, he says almost the same thing:[20]

يا ابا بكر، كفي وكفّ عليّ في العدلِ سواء

Hence the just equality explained by all activities that are done by the hands, because they are always at one's service. Therefore, "all the senses attend," means that all activities are ultimately as if done by the Messenger.

However, "equality in number" is an allusion to equality in all aspects and authority, and whatever the respected Messenger does, then Ali can do the same, because it is especially mentioned here that the effect of power is a tool at the service of the desire of man. Thus, this interpretation means that the power of the Prophet and the power of Ali are equal. All the wonderful miracles that the Prophet performed presuppose Ali's power.

In *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah*, al-Muḥib al-Ṭabarī has narrated from Anas ibn Mālik:

قال رسول الله: ما من نبي الا وله نظير في امته وعليّ نظيري.

The Prophet stated that not a single Prophet came but he had an equivalent in his nation, and that Ali is his equivalent.[21]

This narration demonstrates that among all the people of the nation of the Prophet, no one was as spiritually similar to the Prophet and his characteristics as Ali, and that only he was his equivalent.

There is another similar narration in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah* by Anas ibn Mālik, narrated by al-Ferdūs, which states that the Prophet said:

قال رسول الله: ما من نبي الا وله نظيرٌ الي ان قال وعليّ بن أبيطالب وانا منك.

Not a single Prophet came but he had an equivalent in his nation, and Ali is my equivalent.[22]

And on the virtues of Ali, it says in *Saḥīḥ al-Būkhārī*:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه و آله لعليّ: أنت مِنّي وَأنا مِنك.

The Prophet said: "O Ali, you are with me and I am with you."[23]

This expression indicates the utmost unity. It is as if the two masters are a unique being inhabiting two separate bodies.

In addition, Ibn Ḥajar Heythami Makki, in *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqa* from Barā' ibn Āzib, and al-Muḥib al-Ṭabarī, in the *Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah* from Mullā, have narrated that the Prophet said: "For me, Ali is like the head on my body."[24] This interpretation also demonstrates the utmost unity, as if he had said that just as a body cannot exist without the head, my life depends upon the life of Ali.

In the *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, it is narrated from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet (s) said:

علیّ منّي مثل رأسي من بدني

To me, Ali is the head on my body.[25]

Also in the *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, al-Imam Ahmad narrates from Abū Hurayrah, who said:

كان رسول الله صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم بعث بعثين، و بعث على احدهما عليّاً و على الآخر خالد بن وليد، و قال اذا التقيتم فعلى الناس إمامٌ، و اذا افترقتم فكلُّ على جندِهِ، فلقينا بني زبيد، فاقتتلنا، و سبيناهم، فاصطفى عليٌّ من السبي واحداً لنفسه، فبعثني خالد إلى النبيّ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم، حتّى اخبره بذالك فلمّا أتيت و أخبرته قلت ما ارسلت به؟

قال: لا تقعوا في عليٍّ، فإنّه منّي و أنا منه، و هو وليّ و وصيّ من بعدي.

The Messenger of God prepared two armies and they set out for battle, one led by Ali and the other by Khālid ibn Walīd, and each one had control of his own army.

The Prophet also said that if two are gathered together, there should be one leader (Imam), otherwise each would have his own leader.

Abū Hurayrah said:

> The two armies set out and met the Banī Zubayda. Then we fought the Banī Zubayda and gained victory over them. We took many of them captive, and Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib picked out one of the captives for himself.
>
> It was then that Khālid ibn Walīd sent me to the Prophet to report the case to him, that Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib had selected without permission a captive and taken her as his own.
>
> I set out to the Prophet, and when I reached him I informed him of the matter, saying: "O Messenger of God, I have carried out the duty I was ordered to do, and I did well."

Then the Prophet said: "Do not mention Ali's faults, and do not interfere in his business. Know that Ali is surely from me and I am from Ali, and after me, he has all authority and is the Guardian of my nation."[26]

Ibn Athīr in *Usd al-Ghābah*,[27] with his chain of documents from Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn, and also Qundūzī in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*,[28] from Termidhi's *al-Sunan*, passed down from Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn and Muḥib al-Dīn Ṭabarī, and again from Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn,[29] have narrated that the Prophet put Ali in command of an army, and that after the subsequent fighting Ali took a female captive for himself. Some of his companions were not pleased about this, and four of them went together to the Messenger, and one by one they complained about Ali.

The Prophet turned his face away from them until the fourth one had stood up to repeat the same thing as his friends had said:

فأقبل إليهم رسولُ الله صلى الله عليه و آله والغضبُ يُعرفُ فی وجهه، فقال: ماتُريدونَ مِن عَلیٍّ؟
ماتريدون من عليٍّ؟ ماتريدون من عليٍّ؟ إنَّ عليّاً منّی و أنا من عليٍّ، وهو ولیُّ كلِّ مؤمنٍ بَعدِی.

Soon after, the Prophet turned to them in anger saying: "What do you want from Ali?" three times over.

Certainly Ali is from me and I am from Ali; he is the Guardian and has all authority after me over my nation.[30] Surely, those who disapproved of Ali taking a captive female as his own, how would they bear him being the Leader of the Muslims, even though the stability of Islam was due to his self-sacrifice?

They maltreated him whenever they could, and after thirty years of suffering they killed him while he was praying in the mosque, and thus buried that pure, wholesome soul under the earth, causing the hearts of men, *jinn*, beasts, and the birds of the heavens to mourn for him.

Hasan ibn Athīr Jazari writes:

أنبأنا جدّی، حدّثنا زيد ذن علیّ عن عبيد الله بن موسى، حدثنا الحسن بن كثير عن أبيه قال: خرج
علیّ لِصلوة الفجر فاستقبله الاوزبحين وجهه: قال: فجعلنا نطردهنّ عنه.
فقال: دعوهنّ فإنّهنّ نوايح: وخرج فاصيب.

My father told me:

When the Commander of the believers (Ali) was going (to the mosque) for the dawn prayer, some ducks strutted up to him, and looking at him in the face they started cackling.[31] We wanted to shoo them away, but Ali said: "Leave them alone, for they are mourning for me." Soon after, when he had begun the prayer, he was struck with a sword.

It is true that later the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the desert wept and mourned.

Ibn Shahr Āshūb says: "On the twelfth of Muharram as the Banī Asad came to collect the pure corpses to bury, they noticed the white birds assembling around the sacred bodies."

Majlisī has quoted some of the narrators who have told of the descendants that:

أنه لمّا استشهد الحُسَيْنُ عليه السلام بقي في كَرْبَلاءَ صَريعاً وَدَمُهُ عَلَى الأَرْضِ مَسْفُوحاً وَإِذا بِطَيْرٍ أَبْيَضَ قَدْ أَتى وَتَمَسَّحَ بِدَمِهِ وَجاءَ وَالدَّمُ يَقْطُرُ مِنْهُ فَرَأى طُيُوراً تَحْتَ الظِّلالِ عَلَى الغُصُونِ وَالأَشْجارِ وَكُلٌّ مِنْهُمْ يَذْكُرُ الحَبَّ وَالعَلَفَ وَالماءَ فَقالَ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ الطَّيْرُ المُتَلَطِّخُ بِالدَّمِ يا وَيْلَكُمْ أَتَشْتَغِلُونَ بِالمَلاهِي وَذِكْرِ الدُّنْيا وَالمُتاهِي وَالحُسَيْنُ فِي أَرْضِ كَرْبَلاءَ فِي هَذا الحَرِّ مُلْقًى عَلَى الرِّمْضاءِ ظامِئٌ مَذْبُوحٌ وَدَمُهُ مَسْفُوحٌ فَطارَتِ الطُّيُورُ كُلٌّ مِنْهُمْ قاصِداً كَرْبَلاءَ فَرَأَوْا سَيِّدَنا الحُسَيْنَ (ع) مُلْقًى فِي الأَرْضِ جُثَّةً بِلا رَأْسٍ وَلا غُسْلٍ وَلا كَفَنٍ قَدْ سَفَتْ عَلَيْهِ السَّوافِي وَبَدَنُهُ مَرْضُوضٌ قَدْ هَشَّمَتْهُ الخَيْلُ بِحَوافِرِها نُزَّارُهُ وُحُوشُ القِفارِ وَنَدَبَتْهُ جِنُّ السُّهُولِ وَالأَوْعارِ قَدْ أَضاءَ التُّرابُ مِنْ أَنْوارِهِ وَأَزْهَرَ الجَوُّ مِنْ أَبْخارِهِ فَلَمّا رَأَتْهُ الطُّيُورُ تَصايَحْنَ وَأَعْلَنَّ بِالبُكاءِ وَالثُّبُورِ وَتَواقَصْنَ عَلَى دَمِهِ يَتَمَرَّغْنَ فِيهِ وَطارَ كُلُّ واحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلى ناحِيَةٍ يُعْلِمُ أَهْلَها عَنْ قَتْلِ أَبِي عَبْدِاللهِ

It is narrated by the Household that when Imam Ḥusayn was martyred and his corpse was lying on the ground in Karbala, and blood was still issuing from his body, a white bird came close to him, and after staining its wings with the blood, it flew away with the blood dripping down. It flew off until it reached a patch of green land and saw some birds pecking seeds in the shade of the trees, and others sitting in the trees that were chirping and thinking of how to get more seeds. The blood-stained bird told them:

Woe on you, sitting in this fresh land, talking of how to get more seeds to satisfy your hunger and enjoy your lives! Look! Ḥusayn has just now fallen on the hot sand in the land of Karbala.

He was thirsty and they killed him, and his blood is running on the ground.

Together the birds all left that green land and flew toward Karbala, and when they got there they saw the beheaded body of our Master Ḥusayn lying on the ground. No one had given him the final ablution, nor was he wrapped in a white death shroud. The harsh desert wind had been blowing and had carried swirling dust and sand onto the corpse, which was broken and battered by the enemies' strong horses.

His pilgrims were then the beasts of the desert who were gathering around him; and his mourners were the *jinn* who always live by the passes and in the valleys on the outskirts of towns.

Yet the gloomy desert, with its dust and sand, was illuminated by the light of his body and all around was bright.

Upon seeing this strange sight, the tweeting of the birds changed to squeaks of mourning, and they were openly crying. They rubbed their wings and bodies in the blood and then flew high, looking down at the corpse. Finally, they all sorrowfully flew off in different directions to inform others of the martyrdom of the most revered Aba 'Abdullāh.[32]

On the first day of Rajab we recite from the prayer book for visiting his shrine:

يا أبا عبدالله، اشهدُ لقد اقشعرت لدمائكم أظلّةُ العرشِ مع أظلّةِ الخلائقِ وبكتكمُ السماء و الأرضُ وسكانُ الجنانِ والبرُّ والبحرُ

صلّى الله عليكَ عددَ ما في علمِ الله، لبيكَ داعيَ اللهِ، إن كان لم يجبكَ بدني عند استغاثتِكَ، و لساني عند استنصارِكَ، فقد اجابكَ قلبي وسمعي وبصري، سُبحانَ ربّنا، أن كانَ وعدُ ربّنا لمفعولا.

O Aba 'Abdullāh! I witness and swear that the dwellers in God's firmament and in all the lands of the creatures were shaken, weeping for your agony, and the dwellers in the heavens, on land and in the seas cried for your distress.[33]

May God's endless praises and knowledge be with you. Yes, O yes! O inviter to God, I accept! I declare: "Here I am at your service, O God!" And I hear your call everywhere and accept all! If on that day I was not there to answer your cries for help, and I had no means to come to your aid, today my soul, my body, my heart, my ears, and my eyes are ready to answer your plea and carry out your command.

Glory be to our Creator, and surely the day for meeting Him, for which my sacrifice is worthy.

وبشیری لوجاء مِنک بِطلعٍ ووجودی فی قبضتی قلتُ هاکا

And give thanks for the flower that now has blossomed. Do not spare glad tidings for the meeting with the dawn bird.

Lesson Three:
On the Privileges of God's Chosen Servants

LESSON THREE

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا لِّيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا

(He is) the Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals to none His secret, save to every Messenger whom He has chosen, and then He makes guards to watch before him and behind him that He may know that they have indeed conveyed the messages of their Lord. He surrounds all their doings, and He keeps account of all things. (72:26–28)

Just as a man has different organs and limbs, he has his own instincts and attributes, including anger, hunger, self-preservation, ambition, and certain enjoyments, as well as instincts for revenge, obedience and forgiveness.

It is obvious that attention should be given to each of these, and that each has a proper time; otherwise they are of no use or might even be destructive.

This can happen if the right instinct is applied in the wrong way. For example, if a person enjoys the taste of a meal he is eating, and goes on to overeat, he damages his health and surely ruins himself. And if he does not control his physical desires and has sexual liaisons beyond his capacity, he too ends up in ruin

It is natural to have a love of God and seek the utmost certainty for successfully reaching out to the meeting with God and the state of His Glory. One will not rest until this state is reached, and in order to do so one needs to struggle with and fight the appetitive soul (*nafs al-ammāra*), and be careful to do righteous deeds, avoiding what is against God's Will. Sincerity in doing good deeds is the only means to achieve one's goal.

فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due to his Lord. (18:110)

In every step one takes, one should turn away from self-indulgence and the ornaments of Satan, trust in God, rid oneself of satanic illusions, and bring peace to one's mind by remembering God.

This activity involves a continual struggle, for combating the soul requires deep sincerity, to see in all one does none but God, and to strive simply for the Face of God, the Generous.

A man is never free from the onslaught of illusion and satanic thoughts, even in his restful moments, and unwanted, trifling thoughts invade his mind, even as he sleeps, for they refuse to release their hold. Therefore, for peace and a tranquil mind, one must always remember and mention God, and try hard to avoid annoying, invasive thoughts, keeping one's pure heart away from them. All the time, man must control his personal intentions and prefer the Will of his Creator to his own.

If, God willing, one is strong at this stage and persists, then aggression and self-interest gradually disappear from view, replaced instead by the humility to worship the one Highest Being and a soul that searches for God.

One changes from being an egoist to a worshipper and notices signs of devotion in one's heart, which becomes peaceful and stops wandering, changing from a state of anguish and anxiety to one of tranquility and calmness. One's inner being is cleansed, and satanic illusions do not intrude. Good thoughts enter the mind rather than random ones.

As the heart is truly purified at this stage and becomes obedient in a state of worship, the Divine Light and Beauty reflect in the person, and his heart becomes like a mirror for the attributes of the Highest Beloved. This is the high and praiseworthy state of sincerity.

According to verses in the Qur'an, such people have their own unique characteristics. First of all, Satan and the imperative soul hold no sway over them, and have no hope of influencing them by any means. Satan claims:

وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

...and I will mislead them all, except such of them as are Your devoted servants (15:40)

and:

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

He said: "Then by Your Might, I will surely mislead them all, except for those of Your sincere worshippers." (38:83)

Here Satan himself confesses that he is too weak to mislead the true worshippers, because their hearts are always with God, and it is obvious that he cannot operate where God is.

Such people are always protected by God and are immune to sin, and whether in speech, in seeing, in hearing, openly or in secret, they are free from error. All their actions are rightful—their speech, their seeing, and their hearing; all their organs, limbs, and thoughts work for God and belong to Him, and their hearts are the center that holds the secrets of God, the Munificent.

It is obvious that whatever settles in their hearts does so with God's permission, and whatever their minds receive from above, whether through revelation or their knowledge or senses, it is their just reward from God, for their hearts are pure and far from error.

The mysteries of their thought are far-reaching, and they have surpassed all previously existing problems, having understood their deeper meaning. Thus, they should praise God as is His worth:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

Glorified is Allah above that which they ascribe to Him, except the chosen servants of Allah. (37:159–160)

This is because when God is praised, every creature praises Him according to its means, disposition and knowledge.

God, the Most High, is beyond understanding; therefore no creature can praise Him as He deserves. Therefore, in addition to praising Him, one should glorify Him by mentioning: "O Lord, while we are praising You, we remember Your Beauty and Perfection as befits You. Glory be to my Lord, the Highest, and all praises are for Him; glory be to my Lord, the Greatest, and all praises are for Him":

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ

And the thunder proclaims His praise, as do the angels for awe of Him. (13:13)

Both the thunder and the angels, in awe of God, praise and glorify His Majesty, as do the seven Heavens, the earth, and all that is in between.

وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ

...and there is not a thing that does not celebrate His praise, and yet you understand not their glorification. Verily He is ever Clement, Forgiving. (17:44)

All creatures without exception, with no expectation of reward, increasingly praise and glorify His holy threshold and sanctify His Sacred Being.

Also, the being of the sincere worshippers who seek nothing of their own is joined to His Being, their hearts are turned to the firmament, and it is they who praise God as He deserves, for indeed it is God Who makes them praise.

This is more or less consistent with

ما عرفناكَ حقَّ معرفتِك

We did not understand You as You deserve to be known,

because this phrase demonstrates man's humility and poverty when confronted with the Absolute, and means the same as:

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

Glorified is Allah of whatever they attribute to Him, except the sincere worshippers.

Real annihilation is annihilation in all the names and attributes of His Being alone, that is, an annihilation whereby any expression of one's own being would be unbelief, and not true sincerity.

In addition, there is no need for intercession for those in the graves, or appeal to the two investigating angels, Nakir and Munkir, or of being present at God's tribunal for the weighing of deeds:

فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

...they will certainly be called forth (for punishment), except the sincere and devoted servants of Allah. (37:128)

All creatures will be presented before God and questioned, except for God's sincere worshippers, who, because of their struggle with the senses and the sincerity of their thoughts and deeds, will smoothly pass by the tribunal and take their places sitting in the lofty ranks alongside those truly sincere to God. For how is someone to be questioned when he has sacrificed everything of his own for the sake of God?

The record of actions and the questioning are for those who have the impurity of egoism. Because of this impurity they have committed sin, for they lacked servitude. However, for those whose entire being is nothing but servitude, abject need, and poverty, how is it possible to question them? Such beings have no death and remain eternally alive, because they have become mirrors of God, for Whom death does not exist:

وَيَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَن شَاءَ اللَّهُ

And the Day that the Trumpet will be sounded, and all who are in the Heavens and the earth will start in fear, except for him whom Allah wills. (27:87)

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَن شَاءَ اللَّهُ

And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the Heavens and the earth will swoon away, save him whom Allah wills. (39:68)

It is evident from these two verses that God has chosen a particular group, which is those who desire the Divine Decree. Hence, God does not want to punish them, and so for them there is no fear or death.

At the same time, we see that apart from the Eternal, everything without exception is going to perish:

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

Everything will perish save His Countenance. (28:88)

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

All that is on the earth will pass away, and there will remain the Face of your Lord of Might and Glory. (55:27)

All creatures living on the earth will fade and expire, leaving only the immortal splendor of the Face of God. These two verses,

together with the previous ones, make it clear that those whom God does not want to perish when the trumpet (*ṣūr*) is blown are those who have been always present with Him, having become His Guardians who are "stationed near" His Throne. By considering the phrase:

فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

...they will certainly be called forth (for punishment), except the sincere and devoted servants of Allah,

along with the earlier ones, one can see that the sincere servants of God have no records of their deeds to answer for, and no questioning to undergo; nor do they face death, but will continue as they are forever.

Also, God has not just allocated redemption for His sincere servants. The riches and blessings of Paradise that are given to them are as nothing compared with the reward of their station, where they see only the radiance of the Face of God.

وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

And you are requited for nothing other than what you have done, but not the sincere servants of Allah. (37:39-40)

Their reward is boundless, for they have passed beyond the self and the material world, reaching the ocean of greatness and majesty and a marvelous station. From the foregoing verses describing the state of the sincere, it can be understood that they are entirely different from others, and through God's Grace are immune to Satan, error and sin.

This is the meaning of the infallibility against sin that God mentions in the Holy Qur'an:

We saved Joseph from sin by becoming closer to Zulaykhā, for he was a sincere worshipper of Us.

كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

...Thus did We order that We might ward off evil and shameful deeds from him. Surely, he was one of Our chosen servants. (12:24)

Hence, whosoever is sincere is protected by God from any sin or offence. In addition, as their lives were just and they have passed beyond mortal life to the eternal, no egoism or satanic thought affects them. Therefore, they are secure in the Divine Majesty and receive Divine Knowledge.

The meaning of the above verses can be interpreted into an understanding of how all the three states of infallibility are sent by God to the Imams for them to guide the people.

عَالِمُ الغَيبِ فَلَا يُظهِرُ عَلَى غَيبِهِ أَحَداً إِلَّا مَنِ ارتَضَى مِن رَسُول

He is the Knower of the unseen, and He reveals to none His secret, except to those Messengers whom He has chosen. (72:26–27)

This is to say that God must be entirely pleased with them in all respects. Those who have reached the state of real sincerity are rid of temptation and have become godly and pious. This is real sincerity, and it is obvious that if a person does not reach this state, he will not fulfil his main purpose and gain the approval of the Creator.[34]

It is at this stage that God removes the veil of the heart so that the sincere one may receive of His Knowledge, informing him of what is beyond the reach of the ordinary people, the *jinn*, and the angels.

As God gives of His Knowledge, without alteration or deficiency, his heart must reflect the purity of God and be under His direct control; otherwise, when receiving the unseen knowledge, it might be altered and justified as a common type of knowledge:

فَإِنَّهُ يَسلُكُ مِن بَينِ يَدَيهِ وَمِن خَلفِهِ رَصَداً لِيَعلَمَ أَن قَد أَبلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِم وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيهِم وَأَحصَى كُلَّ شَيءٍ عَدَداً.

...and He appoints a sentinel before him and behind him, so that He may know that they (the angels) have indeed conveyed the messages of their Lord. And He surrounds all their doings, and He keeps count of all things. (72:27–28)

After rightfully receiving this knowledge, since his heart is as a pure filter and free from Satan's reach, he preserves the knowledge as it is, and in due time delivers it, for this is an aspect of infallibility which is necessary for propagating religious knowledge and the Divine commands.

God sets up guards around his heart so that the suggestions of men and *jinn* do not affect him, and this is the Divine immunity given to him. For if God were to leave him to his own devices without protecting him, he would face innumerable calamities. Therefore, such a heart is protected from all danger:

مِن شَرِّ الوَسواسِ الخَنّاسِ الَّذي يُوَسوِسُ في صُدورِ النّاسِ، وَ مِن شَرِّ جَميعِ ما خَلَقَ، وَ مِن شَرِّ النَّفّاثاتِ في العُقَدِ وَ حاسِدٍ إِذا حَسَدَ

From the mischief of the whisperer (of evil) who withdraws (after his whisper)—who whispers in the hearts of mankind—among the jinn and mankind. (114:4–6)

Magic has no effect on him; neither witchcraft nor the power of a lascivious spirit can touch him.

If all creatures were to come together and unite, they would be unable to hinder his way of thinking or influence his knowledge, because the heart of the believer is in God's care, and He has set up guards to protect him.

God has assigned guards all around him for his security.

This is why they propagate all God's messages and commands correctly; they are never negligent in their duty, and God directs them and knows all their affairs.

This stage of infallibility concerns both receiving a message and propagating it, and infallibility in the face of sin. It has been declared contradictory for a Messenger to commit a sin or demonstrate a bad action, for a contradiction is not logical—one aspect is false—and the Prophet, whose heart is secure from Satan's touch, is always on the right side.

In the Chapter of Maryam in the Revelation, God states the following to the Messenger:

وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا

And (Gabriel said) we (the angels) descend not but by command of your Lord. To Him belongs all that is before us and all that is behind us, and all that is in between, and your Lord is never forgetful. (19:64)

The Messenger has been sent to us by God's command. We have no authority of our own, and all that lies before us and behind us belongs to God. Other beings have no way of interfering, and to keep them safe and secure, God is neither wrong nor negligent.

Whatever has been mentioned so far concerns the infallibility of the Prophets and the Imams, and God never separates Himself from them.

The Status of Ali, Master of the Faithful

However we may regard Imam Ali, who is well known as the possessor of the right knowledge, the standard-bearer of Surat al-Ḥamd and pioneer of Monotheism, the fact is that, after saving His Holy Light from the loins of Adam to the venerable Abū Ṭālib, God brought him forth in His own House at the Ka'ba.

His blessed name is Ali, and his epithet Abu al-Ḥassan; his father is Abū Ṭālib, the son of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn 'Abd Manāf. Abū Ṭālib was the esteemed brother of the venerable 'Abdullāh, father of the Prophet. Therefore, Ali was the son of the Prophet's uncle, and his relationship to the Holy Messenger is through 'Abdul Muṭṭalib.

Abū Ṭālib used to be of the nobles of Mecca and was always ready to serve the Prophet. He protected the Prophet, and for as long as he was alive none of the pagan Quraysh in Mecca could hurt the Prophet. For three years he protected the Messenger and others from the Banī Hāshim at a mountain pass, known as Abū Ṭalib's Mountain Pass. He surrendered himself to the Holy Prophet and protected him by any means. It was not until after he died that the hostile pagans found a way to persecute the Messenger and gradually force him to leave Mecca for Medina. Abū Ṭālib was a true and pious Muslim, devoted to the Prophet.[35]

Many poems, too numerous to mention, were written about him and are recorded in anecdotal and historical books. Yet for several reasons, one of which was to protect the Prophet, he would hide his faith from the Quraysh. The Prophet had a great love for him and would call him "father."

His mother was Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad ibn Hāshim ibn 'Abd Manāf, and as Asad was 'Abdul Muṭṭalib's brother, so Abū Ṭālib and Fāṭimah were cousins.

Fāṭimah, daughter of Asad and mother of Ali, was one of the greatest women in Islam. She was the first woman after Khadijah to embrace Islam, and was affectionate towards the Holy Prophet. The Imam called her "mother," and when he migrated to Medina, she immediately did likewise.

Fāṭimah, the Daughter of Asad:
the First Female Migrant to Medina

Ibn Juzi says:

وهي أوّل امرأةٍ هاجرت من مكّه إلى المدينةِ ماشيةً حافيةً وهي أوّل امرةٍ بايعت رسول الله صلّي الله عليهِ و آلهِ بمكّة بعد خديجة.

...and she was the first woman to leave Mecca on foot for Medina, and she was the second woman to pay homage to the Messenger of God in Mecca, the first one being Khadijah.[36]

Ibn Ṣabbāgh Mālikī says:

> Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad, embraced Islam through the Messenger and she migrated to Medina along with him. Then, when she died, the Prophet shrouded her with his own shirt, and ordered Ousāma ibn Zayd and Abū Ayyūb Anṣāri to dig a grave for her.

When they dug down to position the sepulcher stone, the Prophet stepped down into the grave and laid the stone in its place and poured soil on it with his own hands. Then he lay down in the grave and said:

اللهُ الَّذِی یُحیِی وَیُمیتُ وَهُوَ حَیٌّ لا یَمُوتُ اللّهُمَّ اغفِر لِاُمّی فَاطِمَةَ بِنتِ اَسَدٍ وَلَقِّنها حُجَّتَها وَوَسِّع عَلَیها مُدخَلَها بِحَقِّ نَبِیِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَالاَنبیاءِ الَّذِینَ مِن قَبلی فَاِنَّكَ اَرحَمُ الرّاحِمِین.

God is He Who gives life and brings death, and He is Alive and does not perish. O God, forgive my mother, the daughter of Asad, and direct her to her just reward, according to Mohammad and the Messengers prior to him, for indeed You are the most Merciful of the merciful.[37]

The Companions said to the Prophet:

> O Messenger, we witnessed how well you dealt with Fāṭimah such as you had not done with anyone before. You made a shroud for her of your shirt, you set the sepulcher stone in its right place, and you lay in her grave and prayed for her.

The Prophet stated:

> I dressed her with my shirt so that God might dress her with heavenly clothes, and I lay in the grave for the pressure there to be

easier for her. After Abū Ṭālib, Fāṭimah, may peace be upon them both, was the best one to look after me and my affairs.[38]

The grandson of ibn Juzi said: "The demise of Fāṭimah, the daughter of Bani Asad, was in the fourth year of the Migration."[39]

Abū Ṭālib and Fāṭimah, the daughter of Bani Asad, had four sons, who in sequence were called Ṭālib, 'Aqīl, Ja'far and Ali, each of them being different from the others. They also had a daughter who was called Fākhta Umm Hani.[40]

There is no doubt that Imam Ali was born inside the House of God, the Ka'ba. Concerning this, Ḥimyari Sayyid Ismā'il ibn Muhammad states:

وَلَدَتهُ فِي حَرَمِ الاٰلهِ وَامِنِهِ وَالبَيتِ حَيثُ فِنائُهُ وَالمَسجِدُ
بَيضاءُ طاهِرَةُ الثِّيابِ كَرِيمَةٌ طابَت وَطابَ وَلِيدُها وَالمَولِدُ
فِي لَيلَةٍ غابَت نُحوسُ نُجومِها وَبَدَت مَعَ القَمَرِ المُنِيرِ الأَسعَدُ
مَالُفَّ فِي خِرَقِ القَوابِلِ مِثلُهُ إِلَّا ابنُ آمِنَةَ النَّبِيُّ مُحَمَّد

Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad, gave birth to Ali within the House of God, a divinely protected place in the courtyard of the Shrine, the jewel of Mecca.

Fāṭimah was chaste and pious, with an enlightened heart, and a great woman, and just as she was pure, so was her newly-born child and his place of birth.

On the night when the child was born, all the brightest stars seemed to vanish from the vault of the sky, outshone by Fāṭimah and her blessed child.[41]

Other than Mohammad, the Holy Messenger, never has the world seen such a blissful child caressed by its parents and being dressed with fine cloth.[42]

And 'Abdul Bāqi 'Umar[43] says:

انتَ العَلِيُّ الَّذِي فَوقَ العُلى رُفِعا بِبَطنِ مَكَّةَ وَسطَ البَيتِ اذ وُضِعا

You are that noble Ali who was born within the House of God in Mecca, then soared beyond the loftiest heights and was established at the uppermost point.[44]

Ḥakim Nishāburi says:

لَم يُولَدٖ فِي جَوفِ الكَعبَةِ قَبلَ عَلِيٍّ وَلَا بَعدَهُ مَولُودٌ سِوَاهُ إِكراماً لَهُ وَإِجلالاً لِمَحَلِّه

'No child was born inside the Ka'ba before Ali, nor after him. This is because of God's particular favor to him and the magnitude and majesty he was given.

Also, Ṣabbāgh Mālikī says:

وُلِدَ عَلِيٌّ عليه السلام بِمَكَّةَ الْمُشَرَّفَةِ بِدَاخِلِ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ فِي يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ الثَّالِثَ عَشَرَ مِنْ شَهْرِ اللهِ الْأَصَمِّ، رَجَبٍ الْفَرْدِ سَنَةَ ثَلَاثِينَ مِنْ عَامِ الْفِيلِ، قَبْلَ الْهِجْرَةِ بِثَلَاثٍ وَعِشْرِينَ سَنَةً، وَقِيلَ بِخَمْسٍ وَعِشْرِينَ، وَقَبْلَ الْبَعْثِ بِاثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً، وَقِيلَ بِعَشْرِ سِنِينَ، وَلَمْ يُولَدْ فِي الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ، قَبْلَهُ أَحَدٌ سِوَاهُ، وَهِيَ فَضِيلَةٌ خَصَّهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِهَا إِجْلَالًا لَهُ وَإِعْلَانًا لِمَرْتَبَتِهِ وَإِظْهَارًا لِتَكْرِمَتِهِ، وَكَانَ عَلِيٌّ هَاشِمِيًّا مِنْ هَاشِمِيَّيْنِ وَأَوَّلُ مَنْ وُلِدَ هَاشِمٌ مَرَّتَيْنِ.

Ali was born inside the House of God in holy Mecca on Friday the 13th of Rajab, thirty years before the Ām al-Fil (the Year of the Elephant), which was ten years before the first revelation to the Messenger of God, and twenty-three years before the Migration (to Medina).

Before Ali, no child was born in the House of God. This is a virtue that God has favored him with, and it is because of his magnitude, majesty, dignity, and high rank that God has bestowed His mercy upon him.[45] Ali was of the first of the Hāshemite clan to come into the world born of two Hāshemites.[46] Both parents of Ali and his brothers were Hāshemites, and never before had this happened.[47]

The Quality of the Birth of Ali within the Ka'ba

It is narrated that when Ali's mother Fāṭimah was in the first pains of childbirth, she took refuge in the House of God, and while hymning praises, she clung to the drapery of the House, beseeching an easy birth. She looked towards the sky, praying:

> O my Creator, I believe in You and in all the Messengers You have sent, as well as the books You have sent down, and I call forth the utterance of Abraham, the Friend (of Yours) who raised up this House! O God, I swear by this House, and by him who raised it, and by this child I am bearing within my belly, who is my intimate and already speaks to me; I am sure that he is a sign of Your Majesty and Magnitude; ease this my delivery!

'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib and Yazīd ibn Qa'nab were witnessing this and they said:

We saw that a solid wall of the House cracked wide open and Fāṭimah entered and disappeared. Then the gap tightened and joined. We tried hard to open the door of the House and discover Fāṭima's situation, but no matter how hard we tried, we failed. It was then we understood that it was one of God's secret signs.

The story spread throughout Mecca, and the women carried it everywhere and talked about it in their gatherings.

After three days, the same spot in the wall opened again, and Fāṭimah was proudly carrying the baby in her arms, repeating: "Who is there to be like me: to give birth to a babe inside the Ka'ba?"[48]

Ibn Ṣabbāgh Mālikī narrates from the *Manāqib* of Abī al-Āli, al-Mālikī's jurist that it is told of Imam Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn:

One day we were sitting with our father Ḥusayn ibn Ali, and there was also a group of women sitting there. One of them came to us and we asked her: "May God have mercy upon you; who are you?"

She said: "I am Zubda, the daughter of Ajlān, from the clan of Banī Sā'idah."

I said: "Do you have a question to ask? And do you want to let us know of it?"

She said:

Yes, by God. Umm Ammāra, the daughter of Ibāda ibn Faḍlat ibn Mālik ibn Ajlān Sā'idi, informed me: "Once I was among the Arab women when Abū Ṭālib came to us in sorrow. I asked him: 'Why are you so sad?' He said: 'Because Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad, is in pain and expecting to give birth to a child.' Thence, Abū Ṭālib went to her and grasped her arm and took her to the Ka'ba. Telling her in the name of God to sit, he placed her inside the House. Before long she was in great pain and gave birth to a clean and pure child, the like of which we had never seen before. They called him Ali, and composed a poem in his honor:

سَمَّيْتُهُ بِعَلِيٍّ كَيْ يَدُومَ لَهُ عِزُّ الْعُلُوِّ وَعِزُّ الْفَخْرِ ادْوَمَه

We gave him the name of Ali, for he is superior
And always lofty, by Almighty God

and there's no "Allah" (i.e., "Almighty God") in the Arabic here.
In the meantime, the Prophet came and took Ali and his mother from the Ka'ba to her house.

Imam Sajjād said: "By God, I have never heard such good news before—it was the best I heard!"[49]

Shaykh Sulaymān Qundūzī has quoted from the book *Mawaddah al-Qurbā* that 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib said that Fāṭimah wanted to call the child after her father, Asad, but her husband Abū Ṭālib was not interested in this name, so he told Fāṭimah: "Let us climb Mount Abū Qays in the dark of night and call upon God, for He may tell us what to name the baby."

When night fell, both of them set off for Mount Abū Qays and climbed it, and there they both called upon God, and Abū Ṭālib uttered the following:

يارب يا ذا الغسق الدجي والفلق المتلج المضي
بين لنا عن أمرك المقضي بما نسمي ذلك الصبي

O my Creator. O, Owner of the dark night,
And Owner of the bright light of day!
Let us know Your decision, decreed by You,
On what to call this boy (to satisfy You).

At that moment they heard rapid rustlings above, and Abū Ṭālib raised his head and saw a green emerald tablet on which were written four lines. He held out both hands and caught it, and pressed it firmly to his chest. Then he looked at it and read:

خصصتما بالولد الزكي والطاهر المنتجب الرضي
واسمه من قاهر علي علي اشتق من العلي

I assigned you both to have a pure and chaste child, and I have given him the loftiest of names, Ali, which is drawn from My Own Name 'The Most High.'

On seeing this, Abū Ṭālib was delighted. He prostrated himself and right then vowed to sacrifice ten camels. He hung the tablet in the House of the Ka'ba. The Banī Hāshim were pleased with it, and it remained there until the time of Hishām ibn 'Abdul Mālik, when Hajjāj fought with Ibn Zubayr and it disappeared.[50]

Lesson Four:
The Necessity of the Infallibility of the Messengers and the Imams

LESSON FOUR

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَٰكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا.

And thus We have inspired in you a Spirit of Our command. You knew not what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith; but We have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our servants. (42:52)

The Moderate Attributes of Man

There are good attributes that a man may have, such as courage, generosity, chastity, and vigilance, which are useful if used at the right time and in the proper way, but if abused can be harmful. Evil attributes are quite different, and lead to evil actions. The good person does not go to extremes, and neither exceeds limits nor fails to fulfil his duty. For example, courage is good, but it should be applied cautiously.

To some extent, failure to fulfil a duty out of fear or weakness is the sign of a bad attribute, and heedlessly exceeding limits should be discouraged. A person should always exercise these attributes cautiously, and not go to extremes through either weakness or recklessness.

Modesty is also good, but it is wrong to either consider oneself worthless, or to be obsequious towards others, which is improper and ugly to the point of heedlessness and wickedness, which is blameworthy.

Therefore, one should always be very careful to avoid both a lack of self-worth and an exaggerated modesty. Without careful attention, one of these two extremes can develop.

Generosity is also recommended when done intelligently. It is mean not to be generous at the right time, but it can simply be wasteful or extravagant if misapplied. It is obvious that both

extremes are wrong. One should be generous without going to extremes, as this ruins the spirit of generosity.

However, the faculty that controls all these attributes is the intelligence, which is alert to one's activities and has authority over them. Nothing can fulfil its function without the direct supervision of intelligence. However, good and bad attributes remain within a man, and even in the case of men of knowledge, their causes never die, but remain as dormant seeds that can be activated at any time. If these seeds have an opportunity to grow and become active, they quickly assault virtue and wisdom and establish themselves in the mind and character.

If someone is the patient of a doctor, and the doctor tells him to refrain from eating any food, then by using his intelligence and recognizing the usefulness of the abstinence he avoids eating food. Yet if the time is right and he is hungry, and there is well-cooked and delicious-smelling food, he will be lured towards it. Moreover, if there is no one with him to stop him eating, he may totally ignore the prohibition, approach the food, and have his fill. Then, when he is satiated and lies down on his bed, he remembers his mistake and regrets what he has done. He comes to know that, because of a recent operation on his stomach, he must be prepared to suffer.

Similarly, when piety is in control and functioning, it tightly holds on to the reins of the passions, and sinful acts are completely out of the question. Yet since the passions already exist in man, it is possible that, if they are inflamed and the occasion is suitable—especially if one is encouraged by someone else—they will tear away from the reins and lead to an unwanted error.

Of course, when desire is the controlling factor, then wisdom and piety can do nothing to stop it, because at such an acute time wisdom and piety are absent, for if this were otherwise, passion would not gain control.

Thus, it is narrated from the Messenger of God:

لا يَزني الزّاني حينَ يَزني وَهُوَ مُؤمِنٌ وَلا يَشرَبُ الشّارِبُ حينَ يَشرَبُ وَهُوَ مُؤمِن.

The adulterer, when he commits the act, has no belief, and the drunkard has no belief at the time of drinking.[51]

Many educated people often employ repulsive words in conversation or to defend their opinions. After a while they regret it, and an inner voice whispers: "Alas, I was chaste; I had resolved not to lie, not to cause offence or hurt the feelings of others! So what

caused me to lose control and not consider the consequence of telling a lie and thereby abuse the gift of my tongue?"

All this and similar other bad things occur because of hidden attributes and tendencies, and they are activated by thoughts directed at worldly interests that always lie in wait to beguile and capture us.

As mentioned already, this kind of thing invariably happens from time to time.

Ibn Sinā wrote:

اسمع جميع وصيتي فاعمل بها فالطب مجموع بنظم كلامي
أقلل جماعك ما استطعت فانه ماء الحياة تصب في الارحام
إجعل غذائك كل يوم مرة واحذر طعاما قبل هضم طعام

Listen and take my advice, because all medicine is in two sentences:
As much as you can, try to reduce sexuality,
For whatever is poured into wombs is the source of life;
As much as you pour in, you shorten your life.
Then lessen your daily meals to one each day,
And stop eating food before that eaten earlier is digested.[52]

It is said that he was asked: "Now that you know the harm of extravagance, why do you do things to excess?"

He answered: "I would like to benefit the quality of my life, not the quantity of it."

The majority of physicians know the dangers of alcohol; they have studied it and written books and articles about it, but contrary to what they know, some are addicted to it. If a man has sufficient knowledge about the lure of external forces, and cannot control his passions when confronted with them, he is not a fully developed human being.

Like an animal on a leash, he appears to be under control and obedient, but if set free he causes damage.

If the vigilant man avoids ugly deeds such as lying, adultery, oppression, or giving short measures, and even imagining them, then when he sleeps, these external things do not bother him; otherwise evil attributes arise and cause tragic events. He dreams of adultery, usury, self-importance, selfishness, and oppression, and when he wakes up he wonders what these dreams mean. He does not know that the roots of corruption are still in his mind, hiding in some recess ready to crop up one day and manifest their usual evil tricks.

The Prophets, the Imams, and the saints have erased all sources of corruption from their hearts and minds. Almighty God has honored them with an extraordinary knowledge through which they have no desire to sin.

Their insight burns up the roots of all malevolent attributes and wipes them away forever. It destroys the foundations of grudges and aggression in such a way that they never once imagine such things throughout their lives.

This is like Joseph, who had every means at his disposal for committing offence, and was even threatened with punishment if he did not, yet his heart would not let him do so.

This essential characteristic of the heart is what makes them vigilant against error, so that they do not even dream of evil in their sleep.

Throughout their whole lives, there occurs not a single moment when the Guardians and the saints even imagine a sin, let alone commit one.

Even if they were to remain unmarried for a long period, and in the meantime have every facility in their privacy, never would they think of committing a sin, for this happens only with those who are careless of their desires.

The very knowledge with which God has favored them because of their struggle to fight their passions in servitude has brought them to this state where they have shining hearts. Their knowledge is not a common knowledge, but a certain level of understanding that is mentioned as a Spirit of Sanctity, or the Holy Spirit, in the Qur'an:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَٰكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا.

And thus We have inspired in you a Spirit of Our command. You knew not what the scripture was, nor what the Faith; but We have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our servants. (42:52)

This light is the very same Spirit of Sanctity or Holy Spirit that enters a man's heart and changes it, dispelling everything from it but God, and constitutes the infallibility of the Messengers and the Imams.

It should be mentioned here that in this state, one's passions are not entirely destroyed, but sincere belief and obedience do not permit the least possible offence.

Once the Holy Prophet said: "There is a devil with everyone who calls him to sin."

They said: "O Messenger of God, is it the same with you?"

He said:

بَلى وَلكِن شَيطانِي أسلَمَ بِيَدِي.

Yes, but the devil with me by my hand has surrendered; he has become obedient and surrendered to my command.[53]

At this stage the soul is the best provision for godly men, the most honorable gift of the Divine. This is because the soul is reassured and has found the resources to turn to the Kingdom of God.

In the Surat al-An'ām, after God has mentioned in several sequential verses seventeen of the Messengers, such as Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael, Elisha, Moses, Aaron, Jesus, John, David, Solomon, Zachariah, Job, Jonah, and Elijah, and has praised them, He even praises some of their fathers, brothers, and descendants. He has nominated them as celebrated ones, and states:

ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

Such is the guidance of Allah wherewith He guides whom He will of His servants... (6:88)

The Infallibility of the Imams as Mentioned in Three Verses

God's guidance has reached them, the very same guidance that, if God wills, He honors His servant with and guides him, as He says in the following:

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهُدَاهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ

Those are they unto whom Allah gave the scripture and command and prophethood... (6:89)

By the two foregoing verses we can understand that God's guidance has come to the Messengers. Elsewhere He states:

وَمَن يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ وَمَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِن مُّضِلٍّ

He whom Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide. And whoever Allah guides, for him there can be no misleader. (39:36–37)

And also:

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ

He whom Allah guides, he indeed is led aright. (18:17)

These two verses show that the people whom Allah guides are truly guided, and never fall prey to the evil influences of men or *jinn*. All the people of the world combined would not be able to mislead them or change their view in the slightest.

Again, God states:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ

Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you worship not Satan—for he is an open enemy to you—but that you worship Me, for that was the right path? Yet he has led a great number of you astray. Did you not, then, understand? (36:60–62)

In this verse, being "led astray" (*iḍlāl*) means following the devil and being affected by lasciviousness.

According to the meaning of the verses above, God has guided the Messengers, and there is no one to mislead whom God has guided.

As there is no one to tempt or seduce the Messengers, they consequently commit no sins, and this is the meaning of infallibility.

Therefore, the nature of the truly guided infallible ones becomes clear through these three Qur'anic verses.

The Infallibility of Imam Ali

This demonstrates the station of all those who are "near to God" (*muqarrabīn*), the best and highest example of whom is Ali. He is the crown of the religion, the Guardian of the believers, and a trustworthy and infallible leader.

Since his childhood, he was raised and instructed under the direct supervision of the Prophet.

Muhammad ibn Ṭalḥa Shāfi'i[54] (d. 654 AH) and Ibn Ṣabbāgh Mālikī (d. 855 AH)[55] say:

> When Ali (as) left infancy behind, Mecca was suffering from a severe famine. The people became abject and the wealthy lost their property and power. Abū Ṭālib, who was the chief of the Quraysh and had a large family, was also affected and lost everything he owned.

Once the Prophet went to 'Abbās, who was the richest man of the Banī Hāshim, and said: "O Uncle, surely you are aware of the famine in Mecca and that Abū Ṭālib has a large family. So let us go to him and ask him for some of his children to take to our homes to feed and look after them; it may lighten his burden."

'Abbās agreed, and they both went to Abū Ṭālib, saying: "We have come to you in order to help you with your large family until the famine ends and life returns to normal."

Abū Ṭālib said: "You may do this, but leave two my elder sons, Ṭālib and 'Aqīl, with me, and take with you whomever else you wish."

'Abbās took Ja'far with him, and the Prophet took Ali, and they left Abū Ṭālib for their houses. After that, Ali was always under the direct instruction of the Prophet.

When Muhammad was chosen as the Messenger of God, Ali followed him and accepted his prophetic mission. Shi'a narrations[56] claim that Ali was thirteen or even less. Nonetheless, the majority believe that he had not attained puberty. In any case, Ali was the first to embrace Islam and to believe in the prophethood of the Prophet.[57]

In explanation of the following verse:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

And the Foremost are the foremost. (56:10–11)

Tha'ālibi says that Ali was the first to believe in the Prophet. This is clear also to Ibn 'Abbās, Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh Anṣāri, Zayd ibn Arqam, Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir and Rabiat al-Rā'i.

According to authentic sources, Ali later composed the following poem in this regard:

مُحَمَّدُ النَّبِيُّ اخِي وَصِنوِي وَحَمزَةُ سَيِّدُ الشُهداءِ عَمّي
وَجَعفَرُ الَّذِي يُغشِي وَيُمسِي يَطِيرُ مَعَ المَلٰئِكَةِ ابنُ اُمّي
وَبِنتُ مُحَمَّدٍ سَكَنِي وَعِرسِي مَنُوطٌ لَحمُهَا بِدَمِي وَلَحمِي
وَسِبطَا أَحمَدٍ وَلَدَايَ مِنهَا فَأَيُّكُمُ لَهُ سَهمٌ كَسَهمِي
سَبَقتُكُم إِلَى الاسلامِ طُرّاً غُلاماً مَا بَلَغتُ أَوَانَ حُلمِي
وَاوجَبَ لِي وِلايَتَهُ عَلَيكُم رَسُولُ اللهِ يَومَ غَدِيرِ خُمِّ

فَوَيلٌ ثُمَّ وَيلٌ ثُمَّ وَيلٌ لِمَن يَلقَى الالهَ غَداً بِظُلمِى

Muhammad, the Prophet, is my brother, and he is from the same root from which I have grown; and Ḥamzeh, the Master of the Martyrs, is my uncle.

And Ja'far, who flies through the nights and days with a gracious angel in paradise, is the son of my mother.

And the daughter of Mohammad, whose flesh and blood has been mixed with mine, is my cause of tranquility and wife.

And both grandsons of the Prophet (s) are my children: so which of you have such a share as I have?

I embraced Islam prior to all of you, it was when I was still a child, I had not even attained the age of maturity.

And on the Day of Ghadīr Khumm, the Prophet (s) entrusted me with the leadership of you after him.

So woe, woe on them, for after oppressing me, they are to meet God on the Day of Resurrection![58]

It is narrated that Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh Anṣāri said:

I heard that Ali ibn Abū Tālib composed a poem in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, and while he was reading it the Messenger was listening:

أَنَا اَخُو المُصطَفَى لَا شَكَّ فِى نَسَبِى بِهِ رُبِيتُ وَسِبطَاهُ هُمَا وُلدِى

جَدِّى و جَدُّ رَسولِ اللهِ مُنفَرِدٌ وَفَاطِمُ زَوجَتِى لَا قَولَ ذِى فَنَدِ

صَدَّقتُهُ وَجَمِيعُ النَّاسِ فِى بُهَمٍ مِنَ الضَّلَالَةِ وَالإِشرَاكِ وَالكُفرِ

I am the brother of the Messenger of God, the chosen one,
There is no doubt in my lineage.
I have been trained under the supervision of that elevated one,
And both his grandsons are my children.
My grandfather and his grandfather are one person
And Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Messenger, is my wife;
These words are not nonsense, void of meaning.
I believed in the Messenger and confirmed him when all the people were in ignorance and were wondering what to do.

Jābir said:

فتبسم رسول الله وقال: صَدَقتَ يا علی

Then, the Prophet smiled and said: "O Ali, you are right!"[59]

In the Sermon of Ghāseiah in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Ali mentions his childhood while conversing with the Prophet:

وَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَوْضِعِي مِنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِالْقَرَابَةِ الْقَرِيبَةِ وَالْمَنْزِلَةِ الْخَصِيصَةِ وَضَعَنِي فِي حِجْرِهِ وَأَنَا وَلَدٌ وَيَضُمُّنِي إِلَى صَدْرِهِ، وَكَنَفَنِي فِي فِرَاشِهِ وَيُمِسُّنِي جَسَدَهُ، وَيُشِمُّنِي عَرْفَهُ وَكَانَ يَمْضَغُ الشَّيْءَ ثُمَّ يُلْقِمُنِيهِ وَمَا وَجَدَ لِي كِذْبَةً فِي قَوْلٍ، وَلَا خَطْلَةً فِي فِعْلٍ.

وَلَقَدْ قَرَنَ اللهُ بِهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مِنْ لَدُنْ أَنْ كَانَ فَطِيماً أَعْظَمَ مَلَكٍ مِنْ مَلَائِكَتِهِ، يَسْلُكُ بِهِ طَرِيقَ الْمَكَارِمِ وَمَحَاسِنِ أَخْلَاقِ الْعَالَمِ لَيْلَهُ وَنَهَارَهُ، وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَتَّبِعُهُ اتِّبَاعَ الْفَصِيلِ أَثَرَ أُمِّهِ، يَرْفَعُ لِي فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَخْلَاقِهِ عَلَماً وَيَأْمُرُنِي بِالِاقْتِدَاءِ بِهِ.

وَلَقَدْ كَانَ يُجَاوِرُ فِي كُلِّ سَنَةٍ بِحِرَاءَ، فَأَرَاهُ وَلَا يَرَاهُ غَيْرِي، وَلَمْ يَجْمَعْ بَيْتٌ وَاحِدٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ، غَيْرَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَخَدِيجَةَ، وَأَنَا ثَالِثُهُمَا، أَرَى نُورَ الْوَحْيِ وَالرِّسَالَةِ وَأَشَمُّ رِيحَ النُّبُوَّةِ وَلَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ رَنَّةَ الشَّيْطَانِ حِينَ نَزَلَ الْوَحْيُ عَلَيْهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ: مَا هَذِهِ الرَّنَّةُ؟ فَقَالَ: هَذَا الشَّيْطَانُ أَيِسَ مِنْ عِبَادَتِهِ، إِنَّكَ تَسْمَعُ مَا أَسْمَعُ وَتَرَى مَا أَرَى، إِلَّا أَنَّكَ لَسْتَ بِنَبِيٍّ وَلَكِنَّكَ وَزِيرٌ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خَيْرٍ.

O people! Certainly you know my position of close kinship and special relationship with God's Prophet, may the peace and blessing of God be upon him and his descendants.

When I was only a child he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and lay me beside him in his bed, bringing his body so close to mine that I could smell him. He used to chew something and then feed me with it. He found no lie in my speech, nor weakness in any act.

From the time of his weaning, God had placed a mighty angel with him to take him day and night along the path of good character and behavior, while I would follow him like a young camel following the footsteps of its mother.

Every day he would show me in the form of a sign some good attribute that he commanded me to follow.

Every year, he would go into seclusion to the Hill of Ḥirā, where I saw him, but no one else saw him. In those days Islam did not exist in any house other than that of the Prophet, may blessings be upon him, his descendants, and Khadijah. I used to watch and see the effulgence of Divine revelation, and breathed the scent of prophethood.

When the Revelation descended on the Prophet, I heard the moan of Satan. I said: "O Prophet of God, what is this moan?" and he replied: "That is Satan, who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a

Prophet, but you are a vicegerent and you are surely on the path of virtue."[60]

It is surprising that with Ali's high rank, and also the Prophet's decree that he should be his minister and the people's caliph, hardly had the pure body of the Messenger been buried than they gathered at Saghifa Banī Sā'idah and acted against this.

Apart from seizing the caliphate, they upset Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet, by taking from her a garden given to her by her father, the Prophet.

Later on, Fāṭimah went to the mosque to demand her rights and disputed with Abū Bakr. Ibn Shahr Āshūb says:

When Fāṭimah left the mosque for her house, she saw that Ali was waiting for her, and she turned to him saying:

يابن أبيطالب! إشتملت شملة الجنين، وقعدت حجرت الظنين، نقضت قادمة الاجدل فخانك ريش الأعزل.

هذا ابن أبي قحافة، قد إبتزني نحيلة أبي، وبليغة إبني والله لقد جد في ظلامتي والد في خصامي، حتى منعتني القيلة نصرها، والمهاجرة وصلها، وغضت الجماعة دوني طرفها، فلا دافع ولا مانع، خرجت كاظمة، وعدت راغمة.

أضرعت خدك يوم أضعت حدك، إفترست الذئاب وافترسك الذباب، ماكففت قائلا، ولا أغنيت باطلا، ولا خيار لي ليتني مت قبل ذلتي، وتوفيت دون هينتي.

عذيري والله فيك حاميا، ومنك داعيا، ويلاي في كل شارق، مات العمد، ووهن العضد، شكواي إلى ربي، وعدواي إلى أبي، اللهم أنت أشد قوة وأحد بأسا وتنكيلا.

O son of Abū Ṭālib, like a baby grasping its mother's belly you sit in the corner like someone accused! You have broken your strong falcon wings! The weak wings that remain are not strong enough to support you, and you are now like a broken-winged bird being attacked by wild birds.

Now see, this son of Abī Quḥāfa has mercilessly seized my father's gift to me, and has left nothing with me to support my children.

By God, he did a most serious offence to me, and forced his enmity upon me. Not even the sons of Qila defended me, those who are of the supporters of Ous and Khazraj. Nor did the Immigrants help me, and the Muslims too were careless and

overlooked me. There is no one to challenge him and stop his ruthless dealing with me.

By God, I tried to soften my anger when entering the mosque, but I left in dismay.

You humiliated yourself by overlooking what you were deprived of in these affairs. You used to hunt fierce wolves then, but now you cannot even avoid the flies crowding on you. You neither prevented the offence done to you by the malevolent, nor stopped the wrongs.

Now I have no choice. I wish I had died before facing this wretchedness; I wish I had died before being brought so low!

By God, He will examine and question you in this affair!

Woe on me, for this unpleasant event; now my reliance and support has passed away, and my back is weakened. Now I will take my complaint to God, then, on the proper occasion, to my father.

O my God, Your power is most strong and Your revenge is sharp, and Your ruining is more incisive.

Ali answered Fāṭimah:

لاَ وَيْلَ لَكِ، بَلِ الْوَيْلُ لِشَانِئِكِ، نَهْنِهِي عَنْ عِبْرِكِ يَا بِنْتَ الصَّفْوَةِ وَبَقِيَّةَ النُّبُوَّةِ.
ما ونيت في ديني، ولا أخطاءت مقدوري فان كنت تريدين البلغة فإن رزقك مضمون وكفيلك
مامون وما اعد لك خير مما قطع عنك، فاحتسبي!
فقالت: حسبي الله ونعم الوكيل.

You need not say that woe has befallen you, for woe is upon your enemies. Please stop saying such words, O daughter of the best of creatures, and one and only token of the state of prophecy. I have not been languid in my affair, for I have done my best.

If you want a livelihood and provision, know that God is responsible for that; whatever He prepares for you is better than what you have lost. Know that God is sufficient, and take refuge in Him.[61]

Then Fāṭimah said: "God is sufficient for me, and He is the best of guardians."

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid states:

وقد روي عنه عليه السلام: إن فاطمة عليها السلام حرضته يوماً على النهوض والوثوب، فسمع صوت المؤذن: أشهد أن محمداً رسول الله

فقال لها: أيسرّكِ زوالهذا النّداءِ من الارضِ؟

قال: فإنّه ما أقول لكِ

It is narrated from Imam Ali (as) that at one time Fāṭimah (as) was encouraging him to rise up and fight the enemies, when in the meantime the *muezzin* (who recites the *adhān*) called: "I bear witness that Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Then Ali (as) told her: "O Fāṭimah! Would you want this call to be wiped from the surface of the earth?"

She answered: "No," and the Imam said: "This is the very thing that I told you of before."[62]

Lesson Five:
Infallibility as Inheritance

LESSON FIVE

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِن شَيْءٍ وَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

But for the grace of Allah to you, and His mercy, a party of them had resolved to mislead you, but they only mislead themselves, and to you they can do no harm in the least. For Allah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. And ever has the Grace of Allah to you been great. (4:113)

The Infallibility of the Prophet

For the Messengers and the Imams, infallibility is a Divine gift, a special kind of insight and light within the heart. It is unlike the common knowledge of ordinary people, and is never overpowered by the sense faculties.

And never for a moment, in wakefulness or in sleep, in easy or difficult circumstances, in comfort or in distress or defeat do any evil imaginings interfere with them. Their divinely-given infallibility always shines within and erases the tiniest dark spot from their hearts.

This kind of knowledge is neither defeated by the force of the human sense faculties, nor by sensual desires, for it has complete command of them all, and utilizes them for its own benefit by making them work according to its will.

Thus, this shining and compelling knowledge always protects them against sin and error.

It is said that the Prophet and the Imams are invested with the Holy Spirit, which maintains them at the peak of humanity and renders them immune to going astray.

In the foregoing verses, God tells the Prophet, *But for the grace of Allah to you, and His mercy, a party of them had resolved to mislead you, but they only mislead themselves, and to you they can do no harm in the least. For Allah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. And ever has the Grace of Allah to you been great.*

In this verse (which is at the beginning of this lesson), "the Book" means the Revelation containing the decrees of the religion sent by Gabriel to the pure heart of the Messenger; and "the Wisdom" means all knowledge of the Divine Secrets. The purpose of this knowledge is to inform mankind of different facts and perceptions.

The words *Allah has revealed the Book* either explain the preceding sentence or the meaning the sentence contains, that the words of the hypocrites lack any effect on you because of the sound heart through which you are receiving the revelations. Therefore, you are efficiently equipped to receive these inspirations concerning the realities of the unseen, and to explicitly express them to the common people.

Thus the awareness of the Messenger and his protection against being led astray can be easily understood from this verse, and all the details of these realities are due to a unique divinely-given knowledge. It is by that very knowledge that the Prophets receive revelations, the very same knowledge that is known as the Holy Spirit, which in all circumstances protects the messengers from doing wrong.

More about the Infallibility of the Prophets in the Qur'an

Other reasons[63] for the infallibility of the Prophets are given in the following two verses in the Qur'an, the first of which states:

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

Whoso obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those to whom Allah has shown favor, of the Prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they. (4:69)

And the other states:

اهدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ المُستَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ.

Show us the straight path, the path of those whom You have favored; not of those who earn Your anger nor those who go astray. (1:6–7)

In the first verse we can see that God has bestowed blessings upon the Messengers, the martyrs, the friends, and the good, and the second verse tells us that those who have received God's blessings will not go astray.

Therefore, the Messengers, the martyrs, the friends, and the good will never go astray, and as any loss of favor is considered an error, they never go astray.

It is this faculty of preservation that keeps them from sin and offence, and they never so much as make a mistake in even small matters. Thus, their Divine Knowledge and infallibility is used for receiving revelation and propagating it efficiently.

The Infallibility of Aii

God has invested Imam Ali with infallibility, and made him the Guardian, inheritor, and caliph of the Prophet. He was the first to believe in the Prophet and to pray with him.

Ṭabarī, through the reliable documentation of Ibn 'Abbās, narrates:

قال أوّل من صلّي عليٌّ

The first one who prayed was Ali.[64]

He also narrates from Zayd ibn Arqam, who said:

أوّل من أسلم مع رسول اللهِ صلّ اللهُ عليهِ و آلِهِ عليّ بن أبيطالِبٍ

The first one who believed in the Messenger of God was Ali.[65]

He also narrates from Zayd ibn Arqam:

اوّل رجلٍ صلّي مع رسولِ اللهِ صلّ اللهُ عليهِ و آلِهِ عليّ بن أبيطالِبٍ

The first one who prayed was Ali, the son of Abī Ṭālib.

In addition, Abbād ibn 'Abdullāh also narrates that he heard Ali say:

سمعت عليّاً يقول: أنا عبد الله وأخو رسوله وأنا الصّدّيق الأكبر لا يقولها بعدي إلّا كاذبٌ مفتر صلّيت مع رسول الله قبل النّاس بسبع سنين.

I am the servant of God and the brother of His Messenger, and I am the most rightful; after me if anyone would claim this title and say that he had prayed before other people with the Messenger for seven years, he would be a liar.[66]

Both Ibn Ṣabbāgh Mālikī and Muhammad ibn Talḥa Shāfi'ī have said:

وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبلَ بَدوِ امرِهِ إِذَا أَرَادَ الصَّلوةَ خَرَجَ إِلَى شِعَابِ مَكَّةَ مُستَخفِياً وَ اخرَجَ عَلِيّاً مَعَهُ، فَيُصَلِّيانِ مَا شَاءَ اللهُ فَاذَا قَضَيَا رَجَعَا الى مَكَانِهِمَا.

The Prophet used to pray (*ṣalāt*) even before Islam. He often went to the valleys near Mecca and performed his *ṣalāt* secretly. He also took Ali along with him, and they both prayed as much as would satisfy God, and then they returned.[67]

According to his research, Ṭabarī narrates of Yahyā ibn 'Afif Kindi (the brother of Ash'ath ibn Kindi, a friend of 'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, in whose house he lodged when on business in Mecca), that he said:

> I went to Mecca during the time of ignorance and entered the house of 'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. Some time later, the sun rose and appeared in the sky, and I was looking at the Ka'ba when I saw a young man gazing at the sky. He then drew his eyes down and faced the Ka'ba. In the meantime, a youth came and stood on his right side. Soon after, a woman came and stood behind them. The young man bowed down to pray and the others did likewise; the young man stood, and so did they. Then the young man fell prostrate, and the youth and the woman also fell down prostrate.
>
> I said: "O 'Abbās, this is a great thing they are doing."
>
> 'Abbās said: "Yes, it is, but do you know who they are?"
>
> I answered: "No."
>
> He said: "He is Mohammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, the son of my brother. And do you know who that boy with him is?"
>
> I answered: "No."

He said: "He is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, the son of my brother. And do you know who that woman standing behind them is?"

I answered: "No."

He said: She is Khadijah , the daughter of Khuwalayd, the wife of the Prophet, and he is my cousin. And this man has told me that my Creator is the same Creator of the Heavens, and that Creator has commanded them to do such action. By God, except for these three persons, I know none on the earth in this religion.[68]

The Warning Verse and the Tribe Narrative

The Prophet, Ali, and Khadijah prayed and worshipped God for years while no others in Mecca believed in Islam. No one knew of the Prophet's mission until the Warning Verse was revealed by God:

وَ انذِر عَشِيرَتَكَ الأَقرَبِينَ وَ اخفِض جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ المُؤمِنِينَ۔ فَإِن عَصَوكَ فَقُل إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعمَلُونَ۔ وَ تَوَكَّل عَلَى العَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ۔ الَّذِي يَرَيكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ۔ وَ تَقَلُّبَكَ فِي السَّاجِدِينَ۔ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ العَلِيمُ

And warn your tribe of near kindred, and lower your wing to those believers who follow you. Then if they disobey you, say: "Lo! I am innocent of what they do." And put your trust in the Mighty, the Merciful, Who sees you when you stand (to pray), and (sees) your movement among those who prostrate. For He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (26:214–220)

Subsequently the Prophet called together his relatives and clans and announced his prophethood. According to the narrations of the great Muslim historians and narrators, this is known as the Tribe *Hadith* (*hadith al-ashira*).

Allāmah Amīnī has said: "This narration has been passed on by scholars and narrators of both the Shi'a and Sunni sects. They have recorded it in their books of *ṣaḥiḥ* and *musnad hadith*, and have accepted it as authentic."

In addition, the most prominent historians, both Muslim and non-Muslim, regard it as a true event, and some have recorded it in poetry, for example, the poem of Nāshi Ṣaghīr (d. 365 AH).[69]

There follows an explanation of Ṭabarī's original narration from his history book, which is then discussed it in detail.

Ṭabarī's chain of narration passes from Ibn Hamid, back through Salamah, Ibn Isḥāq , 'Abdul Ghaffār ibn Qāsim, Minhāl ibn

'Amr, 'Abdullāh ibn Harith ibn Nawfel ibn 'Abdul Muṭalib, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, and finally to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib who said:

> When the Verse of Warning, *and warn your tribe of near kindred*, was revealed to the Prophet (s), he called me saying:
>
> > O Ali, God has commanded me to give notice to my nearest kinfolk and the relatives; I felt the matter weigh heavy on my shoulders, because I thought that as soon as I opened my mouth to say a word, they would rise against me. So I kept silent until Gabriel next came to me and said: "O Mohammad, if you do not fulfil your duty, your Creator will chastise you." Therefore, prepare for us three kilos' weight of food and add a sheep's thigh to it, and get a bowl of milk. Then, invite all the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib to me, so that I may speak and announce my mission to them.

Whatever the Prophet (s) commanded me I carried out. I invited the sons of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib to the Prophet's house. They were forty altogether, but one more or less. Among them were the Prophet's uncles, Abū Ṭālib, Hamza, 'Abbās, and Abū Lahab.

When all of them were present, the Prophet commanded me to bring the food inside, and I brought it and put it in front of him. The Prophet (s) took a piece of the meat with his hand and tore it into pieces with his teeth, putting the smaller pieces on a big plate and inviting the guests: "Now proceed, mentioning the name of God."

They all had their fill of the food until they had no more room for it. I swear by God, in Whose hands is my soul, that the food I prepared was only enough for a few people, but the Prophet had said: "O food, satisfy this gathering."

Then I presented the bowl of milk and they all drank from it to quench their thirst, and by God, that bowl of milk was just for few persons.

In the meantime, when the Prophet (s) was about to commence his speech, Abū Lahab interrupted, and, pointing to the Prophet and addressing the gathering, said: "This companion of yours has been a magician for a long time!"

Thus, the Messenger kept silent.

The following day he said: "O Ali, when I was about to speak, this man took the lead, and with his ugly words made the clan leave without hearing me, so once more prepare the same food as before and invite them here."

I made the same food and called them all to come. The Prophet ordered me to bring the food, which I did, and as the day before, he invited them to eat, and they ate so much that they had no more room.

Then he said: "Now, quench their thirst." I brought a bowl of milk, and one after another they drank from the bowl and satisfied their bellies.

Then the Prophet began speaking, saying:

> O sons of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, by God, I never remember a young man among the Arabs bringing you a gift better than what I have brought to you. I have brought a blessing for this world and the next, for God, the Most High, has commanded me to invite you to worship Him. So who among you is prepared to assist me in this matter, and so to be as my brother, Guardian, and caliph among the people?

None of those present answered the Prophet. Then I, who was the youngest there, and the poorest and most shabbily dressed among them, said: "Me! O Messenger of God, I am going to assist you!"[70]

It was then the Prophet rested his hand on my shoulder and said to those gathered:

إنّ هذا أخي ووصيّي وخليفتي فيكم، فاسمعوا له وأطيعوا.

This is my brother, my Guardian and my caliph among you, so listen to his command and obey him."

Everyone in the group stood up, while they were laughing and telling Abū Ṭālib: "Now, this man has ordered you to listen to your son and obey his commands."[71]

The Truthfulness of the Tribe Narrative

Allāmah Amīnī says: "In a similar way, Ṭabarī too has quoted a narration that Abū Ja'farIskāfi, the orator of Mu'tazili Baghdādi (d. 240), put it in his book *Naqḍ al-Othmāniyyah* and asserted that the book is authentic."[72]

In addition, some others have done likewise, for example the jurist Burhān al-Dīn in his *Anba' Nujabā al-Abnā* (pp. 46–48), Ibn Athīrin *Kāmil* (vol. 2, p. 24), Abūl Fidā Imād al-Dīn Damishqi in his book on history (vol. 1, p. 116), and Shihāb al-Dīn Khafāji in his interpretation of *al-Shifā* written by Qāḍi 'Ayāḍ (vol. 3, p. 37) has mentioned it, although he has omitted the rest of the narration, but has said that he has added it in *Dalā'il al-Bayhaqi*. Khāzin 'Alā' al-Dīn Baghdādi in his *Tafsir* (p. 390) and Hāfiz Suyūṭī in *Jam' al-Jawāmi'* (vol. 6, p. 392) have narrated the *hadith* from Ṭabarī. On page 397 he also narrated it from the six Qur'an memorizers (*huffāz al-witta*): Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abī Ḥātam, Ibn Mardūd, Abū Na'im, and

Bayhaqi. The *hadith* is also narrated by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid in his interpretation of *Nahj al-Balāghah* (vol. 3, p. 254), George Zaydan in *The History of the Culture of Islam* (vol. 1, p. 31), and Muhammad Hasanayn Heykal in *Muhammad's Life* (p. 104).

Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Zafar Makki Maghrebi was born in 497, and died in 567 or 565, during the Lunar Month of the Emigration.

All the narrators of this *hadith* are reliable; however some consider Abū Maryam 'Abdul-Ghaffār ibn Qāsim as unreliable. This hesitation is for his being Shi'a, although Ibn Uqda has highly praised him in *al-Lisān al-Mizān* (vol. 4, p. 43).

The foregoing six Qur'an memorizers were expert at relating traditions, and also passed narrations to him.

No one has rejected the Tribe Tradition because of Abū Maryam's being in its chain, and *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa* ("Proofs of Prophethood") and *Khaṣā'iṣ al-Nubuwwa* ("Attributes of the Prophet") are used as arguments.

Abū Ja'far Iskāfi and Shihāb al-Dīn Khafāji also consider it authentic, and in *al-Jam' al-Jawāmi'*,[73] Suyūṭī has told how Ibn Jarir Ṭabarī accepted it as genuine.

In addition, the content of this narration has been narrated in many other reliable *hadith*.

Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal narrates in his *Musnad*[74] that all members of the chain of this *hadith* are reliable and authentic, such as Sharik, A'mash Sihāl and 'Abbād.[75]

As we can see, the Tribe Tradition has been narrated by many great scholars, including Ibn Marduyeh, Suyūṭī, Ibn Abī Hātam, Baghawi, Ḥalabi in *Sirat al-Nubuwwa*, and in other books in similar forms, such as:

فَأَيُّكُمْ يُبَايِعُنِي عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ أَخِي وَصَاحِبِي وَوَارِثِي فَلَمْ يَقُمْ إِلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ قَالَ فَعَضَّ وَكُنْتُ أَصْغَرَ الْقَوْمِ
الي ان قال فضرب رسولَ اللهِ بِيدِهِ على يدِي وقال: من بايعني على ان يكون أخي وصاحِبي و
وليّكم مِن بعدي؟
فمددت يدي وقلت: أنا ابايعك
وأيضاً: انا أدعوكم الي كلِمتينِ خفيفتينِ على اللِّسانِ ثقيلتينِ في الميزانِ: شهادةُ أن لا إله إلّا اللهِ وأنّي
رسولُ اللهِ فمن يجيبني إلي هذا الامرِ ويوازرني يكن أخي وزيري ووصيّي ووارِثي وخليفتي مِن
بعدي فلم يجبه أحدٌ مِنهم، فقام عليٌّ وقال: أنا يا رسول اللهِ فقال: إجلِس ثمّ أعاد القول القومِ ثالثاً، فلم يجبه

أحدٌ منهم قام عليٌّ وقال أنا يا رسول الله فقال: إجلس فأنت أخي ووزيري ووصيّي ووارثي وخليفتي من بعدي.

وأيضاً: أيّكم يتأدب أن يكون أخي ووزيري ووصيّي وخليفتي في أمتي وولي كل مؤمن من بعدي فأمسك القوم حتى أعادها ثلاثاً فقال علي ع أنا يا رسول الله فوضع رأسه في حجره وتفل في فيه وقال اللهم املأ جوفه علماً وفهماً وحكماً ثم قال لأبي طالب يا أبا طالب اسمع الآن لابنك وأطع فقد جعله الله من نبيه بمنزلة هارون من موسى.

وأيضاً: من يؤاخيني ويوازرني ويكون وليي ووصيي بعدي وخليفتي في أهلي يقضي ديني؟ إلى أن قال رسول الله لعلي: أنت، قام القوم، وهم يقولون لابي طالب أطع ابنك فقد امر عليك

وأيضاً: فأيكم يقوم فيبايعني على أنه أخي ووارثي ووزيري ووصيي ويكون مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه لا نبي بعدي فسكت القوم فقال ليقومن قائمكم أو ليكونن من غيركم ثم تندمن ثم أعاد الكلام ثلاث مرات قام علي ع فبايعه فأجابه ثم قال ادن مني فدنا منه فمج في فيه وتفل بين كفيه وثديه فقال أبو لهب بئس ما حبوت به ابن عمك أن أجابك فملأت فاه ووجهه بزاقاً قال عليه السلام ملأته حكمة وعلماً.

[The Prophet said]: "Which one of you will volunteer to assist me and then be as my brother, my Guardian and my caliph among the people?"

No one stood up to answer him except me. I stood up, though I was the youngest in the tribe, and answered positively. Then the Prophet rested his hand on my shoulder and said to the gathering...

Also:

"Which one of you volunteers to assist me and then be as my brother, my Guardian and my caliph among the people?"

I answered: "I pay homage."

And:

> I invite you to accept phrases, easily uttered by the tongue, but the weightiest in the balance of deeds: the witnessing that *There is no deity other than God, and Mohammad is the Messenger of God.* And who is going to help me in my affairs? For he who does he will be as my brother, my Guardian, my inheritor and my caliph after me.

Not one of them answered until Ali stood up and said: "I will do this."

He said: "Sit down," and he repeated his words for the third time, but none of them answered this time, either.

Again Ali stood up and said clearly: "I will do this." Then the Messenger said: "Then you are my brother, my Guardian, my inheritor and my caliph after me."

There is also the following version:

"Which of you is entrusted to be as my brother, my minister, my inheritor and my caliph among my nation, and also my Guardian after my death?" All the people there kept silent, and he repeated his words three times. No one but Ali answered: "I am, O Messenger of God."

He was disappointed and turned his face away, saying: "O God, fill his heart with knowledge and understanding of Your command." Then he said to Abī Ṭālib: "O Abī Ṭālib, now listen to your son and obey, for God has assigned him to a Prophet, as Aaron to Moses."

Similarly:

"Who among my relatives is going to support and follow me as my Guardian, inheritor and the caliph after me to carry out his debt and responsibility?"

(There was no response until) the Prophet (s) said to Ali: "It is you." Then the group stood up and said to Abī Ṭālib: "Now, obey your son in what he is going to command you."

And:

"Which one of you will pay homage to me and be as my brother, my minister, and my inheritor, as Aaron is to Moses, except that there is no Prophet after me?" It was only Ali who stood up, paid homage, and responded. Then he said: "Honor me and follow him." It was then that Abū Lahab became furious and spat, and after swallowing his saliva said: "It is bad to give such honor to the son of your uncle."

And the Prophet said: "Increase him in wisdom and knowledge."

Recently, Ahmad Luṭfi has quoted al-Ḥusayn ibn Ali and added it as a narration from Ṭabarī in *Shahid Khālid*; in his book *Muhammad*, Toufigh al-Ḥakim links it with Ṭabarī; and the Egyptian poet al-Ghadīr 'Abdul Masiḥ Anṭāki has mentioned this accord with Ṭabarī's version and has composed a poem about it.

After explaining the narration in detail, Abū Ja'far Iskāfi asks:

Is it reasonable to let a child stand as a chief of the clans and tribes? Is this a sign of prophethood—a child of the age of five or seven?

Is it wise letting a child take part in a gathering of elders?

And, is it approved for the Prophet (s) to put his hand on his shoulder and formally pronounce brotherhood with him, and then nominate him as his Guardian and inheritor, while he lacks competence? It is unwarranted before he attains puberty and is capable of taking the responsibility of guardianship and having enough power to encounter the enemies of God.

Why does this boy not mingle with those of his own age? Why does he not join them? Here he is! After embracing Islam, why did he not join the children, since he was the same age? He did not spend an hour of his time playing with them, so that it could be said that he is enjoying his childhood. His state as a child was not drawn to the wonders of the world.

For us this seems strange, because we have not seen Ali; we only hear of his resolve to preserve Islam and his determination in his affairs. His actions supported his words; Islam was his purity, and his piety confirmed it, and among the people around him he was the first to join the Prophet (s).

Ali is the friend and trustee of the Prophet (s) in this world and the next. He vanquished the passions and was strong and recollected. He endured patiently in the hope of reward in the Hereafter.[76]

The Tribe Tradition and the nomination of Ali, Commander of the Believers, as caliph is so dramatic and important that some of the oriental historians have written about it. In *The Qur'an and Muhammad*, George Sale writes:

At that time, Muhammad was very affectionate to Ali; he embraced him and told those present at the meeting to listen to him and carry out what he says, to regard him as his second-in-command and obey him. This was why the tribe left the assembly and told Abū Ṭalib: "There! Now, you have to obey your son."

Washington Aronick in *The Holy Book*[77] says:

The Prophet (s) stated: "Which one of you is ready to accept me as his brother? Which one of you wishes to be my minister and deputy?" Those present at the session were silent for a while and uttered not a single a word. They looked at each other in the face, and then some in surprise and others mockingly laughed. It was not long until Ali, the son of Ṭālib, without a care for them stood up courageously and said: "Here! O Messenger of God, I am your obedient servant, though still I am young and I am not worthy to be at your service."

Muhammad embraced the trustworthy youth, and in a loud voice said: "Now, see my brother, my minister and deputy."

This courage, boldness and ostentation of Ali as a child provoked laughter from the Quraysh, and they turned to Abū Ṭālib and said mockingly: "You too are expecting us to bow down in front of your son and respect him!"[78]

However, we have to look at this narration in two different ways: one according to the documents and the other through reasoning.

According to the documentation, as already mentioned, it is clear and no Sunni believes that the chain of the narration is weak, but only Ibn Taymiyyah claimed that it was fabricated. On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyyah's words are unreliable, because his prejudice as an eminent enemy of the Shi'a is well known, as well as his rejection of clearly accurate traditions and stories narrated about the Household of the Prophet. It is quite obvious to scholars that his dismissal of the Household is based on resentment.

In *Mir'āt al-Jinān*, Yāfi'ī states that Ibn Taymiyyah's judicial decrees are strange, and explains why they were rejected even by the Sunnis and how he was imprisoned because of them. The most objectionable of his decrees is his rejection of the act of visiting the grave of the Prophet.

One may wonder why Ḥalabi has narrated Ibn Taymiyyah's version of the Clan Tradition, in which he states that the Prophet said:

فمن يجيبني إلى هذا الامر ويوازرني أي يواونني على القيام به

قال علي: انا يا رسول الله وأنا أحدثهم سنا وسكت القوم.

Who will accept my proposal and assist me in bringing it to fruition...? Ali stood up, and in response to the Prophet said that he was ready to assist, while the others kept silent.

Ḥalabi continues the *hadith* up to this point only, and mentions nothing regarding the dignity of Ali or the phrase:

على أن يكون أخي ووصيي وخليفتي من بعدي

The following answer is also omitted:

فأنت أخي ووصيي وخليفتي من بعدي

It is also strange that he says:

Someone has added the phrase:

أخي ووصيّي ووارِثي ووزيري وخليفتي مِن بعدي

He has distorted the meaning of "Ali is going to be my brother, my Guardian and my caliph after me." He has also altered the answer of the Prophet: "So you are my brother, my Guardian and my caliph after me," claiming that the following clause has been added to the Messenger's own words: "My brother, my Guardian, my inheritor, my minister and my caliph."[79]

Ṭabari's Transgression in Relating the Clan Tradition

Allāmah Amīnī says:

> One of the serious crimes they have done regarding this narration is that, although at the time Ṭabarī quoted the foregoing narration in his translation[80] word for word as it appeared to him, he has mentioned some aspects, except for the following phrase:
>
> وصيّي وخليفتي فيكم،
>
> "My Guardian and caliph among you," where he has used the phrase "so and so," (*kadhā wa kadhā*) and then presented the narration as "So which of you is prepared for this matter, to be my brother..." and so forth. In this sentence the Prophet also said: "Indeed my brother," and so on.
>
> It is quite clear how serious it is that he should have concealed this, and to have avoided explaining the virtues of Ali by underestimating and distorting the phrase "my Guardian and my caliph among you."

Ibn Kathīr's Error When Relating the Clan Tradition

After this alteration, Ibn Kathīr Shāmi in his *al-Bidāyah, al-Nihāyah*[81] and *Tafsir al-Qur'an*[82] has put "so and so" instead of "my Guardian and my caliph among you," even though his source is Ṭabarī.

Ibn Kathīr explained the narration in detail, but found it objectionable to record the main point concerning Ali as caliph. This is why he avoided explaining it clearly and quoted the narration erroneously.

Did Ṭabarī mean to do this in his *Tafsir*, when he had previously mentioned those two phrases explicitly in his history? Or was his intention something else? It remains unclear.

Haykal's Transgression When Narrating the Clan Tradition

Muhammad Hasanain Heykal has also altered the narration. First of all, in his first book, *The Life of Muhammad*,[83] he mentions the main part of the narration, and continues:

فَأَيُّكُمْ يُوَازِرُنِي هذا الْأَمْرَ وَأَنْ يَكُونَ أَخِي وَوَصِيِّي وَخَلِيفَتِي فِيكُمْ، فَأَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَمَنُّوا بِتَرْكِهِ، لَكِنَّ عَلِيًّا نَهَضَ وَمَا يَزَالُ صَبِيًّا دُونَ الْحُلُمِ وَقَالَ: أَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ، عَوْنُكَ، أَنَا حَرْبٌ عَلَى مَنْ حَارَبْتَ فَأَتَبَسَّمَ بَنُو هَاشِمٍ وَقَهْقَهَ بَعْضُهُمْ وَجَعَلَ نَظَرَهُمْ يَتَحَوَّلُ مِنْ أَبِي طَالِبٍ إِلَى ابْنِهِ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفُوا مُسْتَهْزِئِينَ.

"Who among you agrees with this matter of being my brother, my Guardian and the caliph?" They all turned away and paid no heed, but Ali stood up, though he had not yet reached puberty, and said: "It is I, O Messenger of God! I will help you. I will help you fight whoever fights you." The Banī Hāshim laughed at him, and some of them turned to Abī Ṭālib and told him to obey his son, and then laughed.[84]

The clause: "I will help you fight whoever fights you" has been added, because it does not appear elsewhere in any other narration. He also omits the Prophet's answer to Ali's words, where he states:

فأنت أخي ووصيي ووارثي وخليفتي فيكم

So among them, you are my brother, my Guardian, my inheritor and my caliph.

When no one noticed this error or criticized it, he left out details of Ali in the second edition of his book.

The reason for the alteration is perhaps to be found in related concerns of Ibn Kathīr, i.e., after the first publication he noticed that he had written things that he ought not have, or that he was overwhelmed by objections from Sunni mass opinion.[85] Also, it is customary for publishers to remove sections they dislike after getting permission from the author. It might also be that the writer was unable to challenge the publisher.[86]

Moving on to the meaning of the tradition and its different interpretations:

خَلِيفَتِي فِيكُمْ وَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ وَأَطِيعُوا

He is my brother, my Guardian and my caliph among you, so listen to him and obey him.

This is an authentic saying from the Prophet, and it is clear that it concerns the caliphate of Ali, as in the story of the Ghadīr al-Khumm.

The issue is that it concerns the beginning of the period of prophethood, while the story of the Ghadīr Khumm was at the end of that period when, prior to the Messenger's demise, Gabriel descended and let him know its import.

Let us not dwell upon previously mentioned narrations that include:

وارثی ووزیری وولیّ کل مؤمن بعدی وهو بمنزلة هرون من موسی ویقضی دینی ولفظ اسمعوا له واطیعوا.

"(He is) my successor, my minister and Guardian of all the believers after me, and he is as Aaron to Moses, to fulfil my debt," and the phrase "listen and obey," which refer to Ali's guardianship and the caliphate.

If we assume that there was nothing after "my brother, my Guardian and my caliph with you," then that alone would clearly prove Ali's caliphate.

From the Very Beginning, Ali's Guardianship Was Announced along with the Religion and the Prophethood of the Prophet

From the very beginning of the prophecy, the guardianship of Ali was announced. Therefore it can certainly be said that from that very time Ali bore witness that:

لا إله إلا الله ومحمّدٌ رسول الله

There is no deity but God and Mohammad is His Messenger,

as well as:

علیٌّ ولیّ الله

Ali is the Guardian of God.

Just as at the beginning of Islam the Prophet invited his family and relatives as witnesses to it, at this particular gathering he instructed them to accept the guardianship of Ali as the Commander of the Believers, and to obey him, thereby officially announcing his guardianship.[87]

One of the major parts of Shi'a Islam is the necessity of following Ali, the Commander of the Believers.

Those who content themselves with being "witnesses" but overlook the guardianship of Ali are in fact rejecting part of the witnessing, and they surely reject a major part of Islam.

From the very beginning of Islam, to follow the Household and to obey them and the guardians of the Prophet were assigned. Since then, and based on this clear assignment, many Qur'anic verses and sayings of the Prophet have reinforced this notion of guardianship. Similar clear verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet have added to this unified view.

Apart from this, the narration indicates that it was Ali who bore the difficulties of prophethood and the risky responsibilities of missionary work, commandments, and *jihad*. Also, as it is the duty of a Messenger to guide people to their destination, he was in this sense a genuine assistant. The narration does not simply mean that he who believes in the Prophet can be the guardian or caliph, but that "He who assists me in this affair and stands by me through difficulties can be my caliph."

Regarding this matter, certain sayings of the Prophet are recorded, such as:

أيكم يوازرني على هذا الامر؟

Which one of you is going to help me in this affair?

أيكم يبايعني على أن يكون أخي وصاحبي ووارثي؟

Which one of you makes allegiance, to be my brother (in Islam), friend, and inheritor?

وَأَيُّكُمْ يُؤَاخِينِي وَيُوَازِرُنِي وَيَكُونُ وَلِيِّي وَوَصِيِّي بَعْدِي وَخَلِيفَتِي فِي أَهْلِي يَقْضِي دَيْنِي

Which one of you is going to deal with me as a brother in this affair and help me by taking the authority of being my guardian after me and my successor in fulfilling my duty?

And

وَأَيُّكُمْ يَتَقَدَّبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ أَخِي وَوَزِيرِي وَوَصِيِّي وَخَلِيفَتِي فِي أُمَّتِي وَوَلِيُّ كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ بَعْدِي؟

Which one of you accepts to be my brother, my minister, my Guardian and caliph for my nation after me, having authority over the people?

It was clearly understood that for fulfilling this difficult and hazardous task, the Prophet was looking for a sincere person to assist him both during his life and after his demise.

What the Prophet intends is clearly expressed in the following:

> Who among you will help me in this serious matter, and rise up to help God's religion; to take the responsibility both during my lifetime and after my death, to stand by me as long as I am alive, and after my death be able to take the responsibility of the mission in order to pay my debt to God?

Thus, by accepting this responsibility, Ali took this responsibility of carrying out all the affairs of Islam and of being the sincere helper of the Prophet.

And there is more:

> May God bless you, Aba al-Hasan! Let it be not assumed that the position of brotherhood, ministry, guardianship, inheritance, and the caliphate that the Prophet gave to Ali was a ceremonial formality, and is a reward for his accepting it, as if he were rewarded for the task that was taken by uttering his statement, for the Messenger explicated the difficulties he would have in his mission. Since he stated:
>
> > Who is to take this insufferably huge mountain on his shoulders? Who is to rise alongside me and revolt against the disbelievers and lessen my impression? Who is to rise courageously alongside me in the fight and to support the right religion? Who is to rise against the severe opposition of the Quraysh and the disbelieving tribes? Who is as the immigrant to wander in the deserts and then flee to unknown destinations? Who is to lie in my bed at the overnight stay and expose his body to the swords of the cruel Arabs? Who is, after my demise, not to be afraid of the hypocrites of his nation, and not to let any passion enter his heart, and to challenge with much hardship, but not to cause offense to anyone? The sighs of my daughter, Zahrā', did not wish to provoke tribal disputes, but for him to be as a peaceful ocean and stand firm in carrying out his duties, not only at this time, but to care for his nation until the Day of Resurrection; to accomplish his duty patiently and proudly, in truth, and in an ascetic manner, to have no care for the impious and to guide the people to the straight path.

O people of the world! Know that on that day of much tribulation, the little boy Ali (as) answered the Prophet (s) positively. With his great power and his positive answer, he avoided the dangers of that perilous state, and prepared to sacrifice himself for Islam at that young age. He

saw clearly the Messenger's twenty-three-year mission and even the state of Islam after his demise, so he stood up and shouted:

> O Messenger of God, here I am! O Messenger of God, it is only I who is to be your loyal and sincere friend and assistant; I will never separate from you for a single moment. I would like to sacrifice my soul, my belongings, my personality, my honor, and my life for the sake of you. It is I who would like to see they have tied a rope around my neck, dragging me to the mosque to pay homage, and not to open my mouth to offend, and to control my emotions.[88]
>
> It is I who is going to witness their setting a fire in front of your daughter's house, and hearing my beloved cry: "O God, O Mohammad!"[89]
>
> But for the security of the religion, the everlasting Qur'an, and safeguarding the importance in the religion, I will not overlook my duty.
>
> I am the very same person that at the sharpest moment of being tested, when two great men of Quraysh, Abū Sufyān and 'Abbās, came to me and said: "Ali, put your hand in ours and swear allegiance, because after that, no one can be against you.[90] Then, if you want to," Abū Sufyān said, "we can fill the streets and lanes with soldiers to defend you against your enemies."
> And Ali said:
>
> But I will not answer them and keep quiet.[91]
>
> It is I, who upon witnessing your daughter's cry and her distress for the taking of her right, will take refuge by your grave and say:
>
> يَا ابْنَ اُمَّ اِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضْعَفُونِی وَكَادُوا أَيَقْتُلُونَنِی.
>
> O son of my mother, the tribe has indeed made me weaker, and they are nearly killing me![92]

It was not unduly that one such person stood up at the assembly in the Clan Tradition, but they did not accept his words, though they believed in the Messenger's truthfulness. The Prophet was not unknown to them, for he had grown up among them, but they knew that by accepting his proposal, they would encounter innumerable problems and difficulties and experience great suffering. This was why they stood up one after another, and mockingly left the session.

Sayyed Ḥimyari composed a satirical poem in reference to the Clan Tradition:

بأبي أنت وأمي يا أمير المؤمنينا
بأبي أنت وأمي وبرهطي أجمعينا

He goes on:

كنت في الدنيا اخاه يوم يدعو الاقربينا

And further says:

من فضله أنه قد كان أول من صلى و آمن بالرحمن إذ كفروا
سنين سبع و أيام محرمة مع النبي على خوف وما شعروا
ويوم قال له جبريل قد علموا أنذر عشيرتك الادنين إن بصروا

Also:

من الذي قال منهم وهو احدثهم سناً وخيرهم في الذكر إذ سطروا
آمنت بالله قد أعطيت نافله لم يعطها أحدٌ جنٌ ولا بشرُ
وإن ما قلته حق وإنهم إن لم يجيبوا فقد خانوا وقد خسروا[2]
فاز قدماً بها والله أكرمه وكان سباق غايات إذا ابتدروا

And in another elegy he says:

علىٌ عليه ردت الشمس مرةً بطيبة يوم الوحي بعد مغيب

Then:

وقيل له أنذر عشيرتك الاولي وهم من شباب أربعين وشيب

And further says:

فاز بها منهم علىٌ وسادهم وماذاك من عاداته بغريب

May my father and mother be sacrificed to you, O Commander of the believers, all my family altogether...

He continues up to:

You were his brother in the world until the day he called you to him from us, from our circle.[93] Then, he adds:

He was the first in virtue who prayed and believed in the Giver of Mercy when all disbelieved. At the age of seven, when it was still not prescribed for him to pray, he prayed with the Prophet in danger and awareness. And once Gabriel said to him: "Now you are to forewarn your intimate clan to observe."

He goes on:

He who responded among them was the youngest among them; he believed in God and was allowed to pray supererogatorily, though it was not required of *jinn* or men before.

Whatever he said was right, but indeed the others were not surprised, for they were cunning.

He won, for it came down to him, and God honored him; he moved purposefully when the rest were sluggish.

And in another satirical saying it is said: "Time and again the sun retreated for Ali's goodness, so did he set on the Day of Revelation."

He goes on:

He was told: "Warn your own chiefs of your clan while he was a forty year old youth."

And:

Ali won the mastership of all, but it was not his custom to surprise others.[94]

Lesson Six:
The Infallibility of the Messengers Does Not Repel Their Optional Acts

LESSON SIX

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ.

And Messengers We have mentioned unto you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, and Allah spoke directly unto Moses. (4:164)

The Perfect Infallibility of the Prophets as Proofs of God

There have always been Messengers who brought the good news from God and His warning to the people so that there would be no reason for them to turn away from God.

The foregoing Verse of Bliss clearly expresses the giving of good news and warnings, so that they have no excuse for covering their sins, and to have no excuse on the Day of Resurrection to say: "We had no one to guide us, and we did not know what to do."

It is obvious that the reliable sayings and deeds of the Prophets are due to their infallibility, for they are free of error in what they say and do. They make no mistakes when receiving the commands of God and announcing them to the people, for otherwise people would find reasons to doubt them.

They would say: "We committed sins because we found our Prophets were in error, and whatever crimes we did were because of the mistakes of the Prophets, and was due to them. They either did not receive the revelation correctly or failed to deliver it to us properly, and this is why we failed in carrying out our duty."

Therefore, as the Prophets have come for this specific purpose, they can never make mistakes; otherwise their missions would be fruitless. This is the meaning of infallibility.

Proof of Infallibility in Another Verse

We also find the significance of infallibility in this verse:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

Those are they, the secrets of whose hearts Allah knows. So oppose them and admonish them, and address them in plain terms about their souls. (4:63)

That is, the people are to obey them. So when the messengers, with the permission of God, become the center of the obedience and the people who are obeying them too are obedient to them, then God's will and blessings fall upon them.

It is clear that if a Prophet makes a mistake in his speech or commits sins, or otherwise trespasses by violating his duty in speech or in act—both of which are means of expressing his message—then obviously this would extend beyond his boundaries and be opposed to what is right.

And according to the foregoing Verse of Bliss, wherein God's permission is incumbent in their actions, then it must also apply to any wrong action. However, as the will of God is permanent and calls for right action, then the Prophets would not make any mistake, because of the permission for their right actions.

وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ

But Allah speaks the truth and shows the way. (33:4)

In addition, if a Messenger were to make a mistake in his speech or actions, he would be subject to God's anger and be rejected by Him, for sin is the cause of the wrath of God. Therefore, any sin on their part is against the will and satisfaction of God, but their good deeds are approved by Him.

"Exposure to anger and being rejected" is because of sins committed, and God hates and rejects any sin; and "deserving the affection and the command of God" is because of their speaking and acting with the permission of God. Thus, their speech and actions are directly in accord with the will and command of God.

On the other hand, as both "affection and hatred" or "the command and rejection" cannot be reconciled as a single unit, it is impossible for the Messengers to sin, and is therefore the meaning of infallibility.

The Habitus of Infallibility Is Not Caused by Predestination

Most people believe that the Messengers and the Imams, having the habitus of infallibility, are self-sufficient, and their activities are fulfilled without their knowledge and their own determination.

The angels that God has assigned to them to protect them from error and sin, and to carry out their duties, support and secure them from all wrong.

Therefore, their worship and struggle cannot be compared with that of the common people, who in this way struggle and fight against their egos to reach God, and naturally encounter hardships.

But they, the Prophets, while enjoying peace of mind, are guided by the angels, and this is why they are by nature pure and cleansed.

So, whatever the apparent teachings and servitude they may have done cannot be expected from the common people, simply because their category is totally different from that of others.

Consequently, their actions and words are quite different from those of ordinary people, and in that case, it is obvious that their infallibility is not theirs, but is in God's hands and under His control. It means they have no option or power of their own other than God.

The contrary supposition is wrong, and besides causes a certain slackness in the opinion of the people, for although they are pure and have their own infallibility, and are immune to this through God, being looked after by His angels, their purity, their chastity, and the decisions of God are always with them. Thus, without ordinary human attributes, they act upon nothing of their own.

To be more explicit, we might say that all events and the beings in this world come into existence by certain causes that pre-exist and from which things are issued and come into existence.

Therefore, everything done or said by a Prophet is based on a certain fact and all are right, which is the effect of what a Prophet owns, the very same power that is his.

It is similar to what we do: we cannot fulfil an action unless we have the desire and determination to do it and then follow it through. We first imagine what we are going to do, picturing it in our mind, and have an interest in doing it, followed by the desire to initiate it.

It is the same with the Prophets: a Prophet carries out a job after picturing it in his mind and having a strong determination to do it.

Once more, to emphasize the point, we might say that we, as ordinary people, do both good and bad things. But to do good, we

must first form a theoretical picture in our mind, and then have the desire to do it. Similarly with doing a bad thing: first we must create the image in our minds, and then have the determination to fulfil it.

Now, let us suppose that there are those who always have good things in their minds; then it is obvious that after determining to do such things and carrying them out, their minds will be accustomed to doing these kinds of things.

Conversely, if certain people always have evil things in their minds and seek to accomplish them, they will surely do devilish things. These are the people of adversity, while the former ones are the blessed.

The Prophets are of certain categories that always imagine goodness, benevolence, and mercy in their minds; their interest is in them and of course they act upon them. As these kinds of images are constantly in their minds, it naturally becomes a habit to them: the habitus of infallibility, courage, and generosity.

Because of the Messengers' permanent submissiveness to moral virtue, whatever they do accords with this; and it is this very same submission to obedience, namely the habitus, that remains firm and unchangeable in the knowledge granted to them.

The Superiority of the Prophets as Due to Their Exercise of Power

This is the cause of the pre-eminence of the Prophets above the common people. The habitus of their souls and their perfect intellects continually fulfil their dutiful tasks.

If it were assumed that they carry out their duties automatically without their personal will and given knowledge—as a clock when it is wound functions, or as a door opens when the key is turned without its own will—then what would be the difference? What would make them noble and superior?

Apart from this, the Prophets receive revelations, and it is obvious that they do not make mistakes when receiving or transmitting them. But if this were without some kind of personal faculty or aptitude, it could be assumed that they had no option in the matter. This would be inconsistent with our belief that the Prophets, like other people, have their own authority in doing things.

Therefore, everything done by the Messengers, whether in speech, actions, or miracles, is all done of their own will, desire, and choice, but with the permission of God and the support of the angels. That is, it is a combination of their potential, the permission of God, and the support of the angels.

Here, we present our discussion of the Messengers' infallibility, but to make their divinely bestowed gifts clear, and also to specify their superiority over other people, we need to further discuss their qualities. Several points need to be elaborated about their eminence within creation, and how they possess infallibility.

Creation Being Other Than "Manifestation" or "Birth and Departing"

First of all we examine the issue of the creation of immaterial and corporeal entities, and how they are all the manifestation of God's light.

Every contingent reality or event, according to its circumstances and capacity, derives from the Light of God. It is thus inspired and comes into existence.

The meaning of creation is not that something is issued from God and then continues living on its own, relying on its own power, having specific attributes and the freedom to exist.

Therefore, all beings other than God depend on Him, and if for an instance this should not be so, the whole universe would plunge into sheer darkness.

As it says in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

O mankind! You are the poor toward Allah, but Allah is free of all need, the Praiseworthy. (35:15)

Therefore, all people are entirely dependent upon Him, while He is without any need, and therefore worthy of praise and glory.

This explains why the Prophets declared their weakness, poverty, and inability in their supplications towards God. They believed that they were poor and abject before the Glory and Majesty of the Creator. They fell down to prostrate themselves in their supplications, not artificially or simply as a demonstration for others, but sincerely and with deep concern.

So in this respect there is no difference between the Messengers, the Imams, and the ordinary people. Whatever any individual has is from God and is for God. No one has anything without the reality of God.

The Foundation of the Entire Being Is Based on the Variation of Creatures

The second point is that the basis of creation is due to various advents and manifestations.

In philosophy, the questions of whether a single unit begets another single unit, and in mysticism the principle that the manifestations of the Supreme Being are not repeated, are discussed by Muslim mystic sages.

Among the whole creation of the universe, there are no two things that are exactly the same. There are similar creations that seem more or less alike, but there are never two of them precisely the same.

Nowadays, so-called experimental science has claimed this to be true. But experimental analysis has found that two things never resemble each other, each having its own special characteristics.

From the very beginning with the creation of Adam until life ceases there will be no two men exactly the same, neither in shape nor in attributes.

For example, there are no two people whose fingerprints are the same; the lines on their fingers are different, and by identifying those lines criminals are known and arrested.

Not even two marks on people's skin are the same.

The lines on a certain finger of the right hand are different from the same finger of the left hand; the lines on the thumb of the right hand are different from the thumb of the left hand.

Thus, basic parts of each person's body in creation are different, just as their appearances are different. They also have different characters and psychic attributes.

We always consider that some children differ in their attributes, such as generosity, forgiveness, modesty, gentleness, intelligence, and understanding.

Similarly, the Prophets and the Imams are different from the other creatures.

Even the Prophets, who have the responsibility of delivering the messages of God to the people, and who carry out their duties and invite the people to God, are all from one source, and their return is the same. Although God states:

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ

...We make no distinction between any of His Messengers (2:285)

they are quite different in tolerance, attributes, and their divinely-given gifts.

As God states:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ

Of these apostles, some of whom We have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some to whom Allah spoke, while others He exalted (above others) in degree; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Holy Spirit... (2:253)

The stories and the attributes of the Messengers become clearer to us by the repeated explanations of them throughout the Qur'an.

All the Strength and Intelligence Supporting Creatures Is Moving towards Perfection

The third matter concerns the creatures that possess strength and intelligence that has to be activated, for they have to move in this direction.

The result of this motion is from the interior and the intelligence to the stages of manifestation and activity.

All creatures, from the smallest insects to the largest mammals, from man to animal, dust and purely gross matter, from small plants to trees, all have a part in this motion, and move towards their destination, from the lowest stage of existence to the highest.

This includes the Prophets and the Imams, who are not exempt. We see that they have also been generated by germ cells and have been born from mothers. They have been endowed with physical bodies of flesh, bones, and muscles, and the powers of seeing, hearing, and speech, which they have developed and put into practice just as other people have. They have come from nothing into existence and have started to act.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

You, verily, O man, are working toward your Lord a work that you will meet (in His presence). (84:6)

The nature and development of the Messengers are similar to that of ordinary people: from birth, and from childhood to maturity, and from weakness to strength.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

Say: "I am a man like yourselves..." (18:110)

And also:

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِن قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَٰذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ.

And the chiefs of his people, who disbelieved and denied the encountering of the Hereafter, and whom We bestowed good things in the life in this world, said: "This is a mortal like you, who eats what you eat, and drinks what you drink." (23:33)

Similarly, in bringing out their talents, desires, attributes, and beauty, they are like other people, and during their lives they refined them and put them into practice.

The Perfection of Every Creature Depends upon Putting Its Talents into Practice

The fourth point is how to benefit and activate the intelligence that is closely related to true intelligence itself. Certain kinds of activity are related to man's own intelligence, and those of an animal are related to its own intelligence. But never is that of an ostrich like that of a bird of prey, or that of a sheep like that of a camel or a horse.

Each of these different creatures carries out its duty and moves from inception to completion according to its own power and intelligence, which is nonetheless given to it by God.

Every human being, too, according to the capacity of its natural intelligence, moves towards integrity and completion according to its own instincts and attributes.

Therefore, it is absolutely impossible for two people to have the same talents, intelligence or attributes.

Never could Moses be Jesus, or Jesus be Moses! While both of them were Prophets, they were different from the moment of their conception in the womb, when they were children, and at their deaths.

And Jesus, while still speaking in the cradle, stated that he was already given prophethood, and his state, when the Gospel was revealed and the Divine miracles came down to him, and he was inviting the Children of Israel to witness his healing of lepers, bringing the dead to life, and giving sight to the blind, was quite

different from the story of Jesus in his mother's stomach, as well as different from the other Messengers.

God's Expectations of an Individual in This Realm Are That of the Individual, and Not That of Anyone Else

The fifth aspect we discuss here is that the expectation of the universe from an individual is his own perfection, and not that of another. Every separate entity of being in the universe—the intellects, the angels, the stars, the suns, the moon, and the desires of all beings—is to use its divinely-given talents in the best way possible, without wasting it. They all wish, through struggle and resistance, to move onward to the safety and security of the Divine Reality. They do not expect, on the course they are going, to activate their given intelligence to contact those with different thoughts and attributes.

As it is said in the following verses:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Allah charges no soul beyond its capacity... (2:286)

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا

...Allah asks naught of any soul save that He has given it... (65:7)

(that is, God's Justice does not harm anyone as much as an atom's weight.)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا

Surely Allah does not wrong mankind at all... (10:44)

And

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ

Surely, Allah is never unjust in the least degree... (4:40)

God is Just and He acts justly. It would be unjust, for example, if an ant were required to perform the task of a grasshopper. If one expects an ant to carry out its own dutiful task, and cooperate with the weaker ants, then there is no oppression, for this is the right thing to do. It is done according to the talents and intelligence of that

particular insect—its duty of preventing harm to other ants is straightforward justice.

If God had enjoined all His creatures to fulfil the same tasks as the Messengers, then it would not only be unjust, but also a form of oppression. However, if He expects any of His creatures to fulfil its duty according to its own capacity and intelligence, and to obey Him and follow whatever the Messenger has instructed, then this cannot be regarded as oppression.

The Prophets Had Sufficient Knowledge and Free Will for Their Activities—Whether Miracles or Otherwise

The sixth point in this section is that the Prophets, like anyone else, have knowledge and authority. All the revelations they received and announced to the people, the miracles at their disposal, and their obedience when they prostrated themselves in front of the Creator, as well as other optional activities, they did of their own free will, not by force.

However, purification, cleanliness, knowledge, the power of thought, practical power, and many others aspects have found their way into the kernel of their being through the grace of God, and were then later manifested.

Since through these discussions things have perhaps become clear, the infallibility and chastity of the creation of the Messengers and the Imams becomes obvious.

First of all, the habitus of the Messengers' infallibility, which keeps them immune from sin and is bestowed upon them as a Divine gift, is quite understandable.

However, in the beginning, this bestowed infallibility was like an energy and talent, and in their sleep and wakefulness was with them. Then, after long struggles with hardship, prayer, and obedience, it developed and reached the stage of completion.

As with the habitus of other people, such as science and the arts, after they master them their habitus does not abandon them, and it is with them throughout their lives.

The completion of this habitus was obtainable, since the origin of it is a Divine gift given to the Prophets, the Imams, and the saints.

Secondly, the habitus of infallibility is an attribute by means of which, with their superiority and nobility, the Prophets have attained generosity and nobility. It has separated them from ordinary people, just as with a distinguished physician or mathematician.

A physician heals a body and a mathematician deals with his own task. The possessors of infallibility deal with the facts and the essence of the truth, and in the meantime, as with other "professionals," they deal with external phenomena. Since, of course, as external healing has no sin, the Prophets too are free from sin. The experts in physics and science are not the same, for they are experts in one thing only.

Thirdly, this talent invested in the Prophets but not in others is not unjust or repressive, since oppression implies that something is expected from someone beyond his tolerance. Never has God loaded upon ordinary people what He has entrusted to the Prophets because of their capacities and talents. Thus, none of this involves an imposition.

God has invested everyone and everything with capacities according to capability and talent. That of the tiniest creatures is His knowledge, for it is He Who has commissioned it.

This statement of Avicenna refers to this:

مَا جَعَلَ اللهُ المِشمِشَةَ مِشمِشَةً بَلْ أَوْجَدَهَا

God has not made the nature of the apricot as the 'apricot,' but He has just made it.

Therefore, God has created all beings differently, and has tested each of them according to its abilities. He has done so also with the Prophets with their divinely-given talents. The Messengers chose this road with their desires, obedience, and choice, and successfully followed it to the end.

In any case, perfection is specific only to God, and the source of all the qualities of the Prophets and others refers to Him.[95]

God has appeared with glory in the spirits of all the Prophets and other beings in diverse ways, but most perfectly in the Prophet of Islam. It is not that God has taken something away from His Holiness and transferred it into them, or that He has reduced any of His attributes and delivered them to them.

For He has stated concerning Himself that:

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him. (112:3–4)

So in the field of the Unity, except the Essence of the Majesty of Oneness, no creature has anything of his own for which it can be praised—neither the Prophets nor others; everything is from God and belongs to Him.

As it is stated:

لهالحمدفيالاولىوالآخرة

To Him all praise is due, at the first and at the last. (28:70)

Indeed, this praiseworthiness of God Himself explains the superiority and the nobility of those of great merit and capacity, including the capaciousness of the Prophets (which is more than that of others), and their superior talents and deeds.

والحمدللهأولاًوآخراًوظاهراًوباطنا

And, the first and the last, and all manifest and secret praise belongs to Allah.

Concerning the infallibility of Ali by the unity of his soul with the soul of the Prophet, according to this clear text, Ali had the same spirit of the Prophet; therefore, his blessed heart possessed the same illuminating infallibility.

There are many narrations by the Sunnis about the unity of his soul with that of the Prophet; therefore we briefly mention a few of them.

Regarding the virtues of Ali ibn al-Hasan, about Ali al-Riḍā concerning his father, and his father in respect of Ali, Qundūzī said:

> Indeed, the Prophet taught us saying: "O people, indeed, the month of Allah's possessing blessings, mercy, and forgiveness is approaching." Mentioning the name of the month of Ramaḍān, he then wept, and I asked: "O Messenger of God, why are you crying?"

قَالَ يَا عَلِيُّ أَبْكِي لِمَا يُسْتَحَلُّ مِنْكَ فِي هَذَا الشَّهْرِ كَأَنِّي بِكَ وَأَنْتَ تُصَلِّي لِرَبِّكَ وَقَدِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقَى الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ شَقِيُّ عَاقِرِ نَاقَةِ ثَمُودَ فَضَرَبَكَ ضَرْبَةً عَلَى قَرْنِكَ فَخُضِبَ مِنْهَا لِحْيَتُكَ قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَذَلِكَ فِي سَلَامَةٍ مِنْ دِينِي قَالَ ص فِي سَلَامَةٍ مِنْ دِينِكَ ثُمَّ قَالَ ص يَا عَلِيُّ مَنْ قَتَلَكَ فَقَدْ قَتَلَنِي وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَكَ فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَنِي وَمَنْ سَبَّكَ فَقَدْ سَبَّنِي لِأَنَّكَ مِنِّي كَنَفْسِي رُوحُكَ مِنْ رُوحِي وَ طِينَتُكَ مِنْ طِينَتِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى خَلَقَنِي وَإِيَّاكَ وَاصْطَفَانِي وَإِيَّاكَ وَاخْتَارَنِي لِلنُّبُوَّةِ وَاخْتَارَكَ

لِلْإِمَامَةِ فَمَنْ أَنْكَرَ إِمَامَتَكَ فَقَدْ أَنْكَرَ نُبُوَّتِي يَا عَلِيُّ أَنْتَ وَصِيِّي وَأَبُو وُلْدِي وَزَوْجُ ابْنَتِي وَخَلِيفَتِي عَلَى أُمَّتِي فِي حَيَاتِي وَبَعْدَ مَوْتِي أَمْرُكَ أَمْرِي وَنَهْيُكَ نَهْيِي أُقْسِمُ بِالَّذِي بَعَثَنِي بِالنُّبُوَّةِ وَجَعَلَنِي خَيْرَ الْبَرِيَّةِ إِنَّكَ لَحُجَّةُ اللهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ وَأَمِينُهُ عَلَى سِرِّهِ وَخَلِيفَتُهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ.

Then he said:

> O Ali, I weep for you because they are going to attack you in this month. I weep for you that when you are praying, the first but final miserable thing will happen. A brutal man, like those cruel ones who hamstrung the she-camel of Ṣāliḥ, will strike you once on the head and (the blood) will dye your beard red. So I asked: "O Messenger of God, is that the safety of my faith?" He said: "Indeed it is for the safety of your faith." I said: "Then, this is indeed admirably good news."

Then he said:

> O Ali, whoever slays you, he indeed slays me; and he who has grudges against you, for sure he has grudges against me. Whoever abuses you, certainly he abuses me; for indeed you are of me: your soul is my soul; your nature is my nature. And indeed God, the Blessed and Exalted, created you and me from His Light. He raised me as He did you; He authorized me as His Prophet, and gave you the authority of the Imamate. Whoever rejects your Imamate, he indeed rejects my prophethood. O Ali, you are my Guardian and heir, and father of my sons, and the husband of my daughter; your command is my command, and your prohibition is my prohibition. I swear by God, Who raised me for the prophethood and assigned me benevolence for the creatures, that you are indeed the proof of God for His creatures, His trust for His secret, and His caliph for His obedient worshippers.[96]

There are several aspects in this narration that clearly prove the unity of the soul of Ali with that of the Prophet, the most obvious of which is: "Whoever rejects your Imamate, he indeed rejects my prophethood."

Here it should be understood that the question of the Imamate is in the spirit of Islam as well as an article of faith, for without that a person's belief is devoid of fulfilment even if he professes the prophethood a thousand times.

In the *Sirat al-Ḥalabiyyah* it is said:

قال أبو بكر سمعت رسول الله يقول: عليٌّ مني بمنزلتي من ربي

Abū Bakr said: 'I heard the Messenger of God say that Ali's rank is with me, as my rank is with God.'[97]

And Qundūzī records that 'Imrān ibn al-Haṣīn reported that the Prophet (s) said:

عَلِيٌّ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْهُ، وَهُوَ وَلِيُّ كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ بَعْدِي

Ali is for me and I am for Ali; and he is the Guardian of all the believing men and women after me.[98]

Imrān ibn al-Haṣīn narrates: "The Prophet said: 'Ali is from me and I am from Ali; and he is the custodian and Guardian for all believing men and women after me.'"

He has also narrated that Salmān said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ صَاحِبُ سِرٍّ وَصَاحِبُ سِرِّي عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ

The Messenger of God, may blessings be upon him and his descendants, said: 'For every messenger there is one to keep his secret, and the keeper of my secret is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib'[99]

And it is reported that the Prophet himself said:

خُلِقْتُ أَنَا وَعَلِيٌّ مِنْ نُورٍ وَاحِدٍ

Ali and I have been created from the same Light.[100]

It is narrated that Anas ibn Mālik said:

رأيت رسول الله جالساً مع علي فقال: أنا وعلي حجة الله على خلقه

I saw the Prophet sitting with Ali and saying: 'Ali and I are the proofs of God for His creatures.'[101]

Also, it is narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd: "The Prophet also said: 'Ali and I are of a single tree, while the people are of different trees.'"

It is also said that the author of the *hadith* collection *Mawaddah al-Qurbā* has quoted Ibn 'Abbās as saying that the Messenger said:

خلقت أنا و علي من شجرة واحدة والناس من أشجار شتي

Ali and I are created from a single tree, but the people are from different trees.[102]

And in another narration from him he quotes:

خُلِقْتُ اَنَا وَ عَلِيٌّ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ واحِدَةٍ، وَالنَّاسُ مِنْ اَشْجارٍ شَتَّى. وفي رواية عنه: خَلَقَ الْاَنْبياءَ مِنْ اَشْجارٍ شَتَّى وَ خَلَقَنِي وَ عَلِيّاً مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ واحِدَةٍ، فَاَنَا اَصْلُها وَ عَلِيٌّ فَرْعُها وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ ثِمارُها وَ اَشْياعُنا اَوْراقُها، فَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ بِها نَجى، وَ مَنْ زاغَ عَنْها هَوى

The Prophet stated:

> God created the Messengers from different trees, but Ali and I have been created from just one: I am the trunk of that tree and Ali is the branch, and Ḥassan and Ḥusayn are the fruits therefrom, and our followers are the leaves. Therefore, whoever clings to us is saved, while he who rejects us perishes.[103]

Ali's Great Generosity and Devotion to the Prophet

Ali accompanied the Holy Prophet in all stages of his life, and sincerely sacrificed himself to him. Not a moment passed in his self-sacrifice to him.

On the other hand, the unbelievers among the Quraysh tormented the Muslims until, with God's permission, some of the Muslims decided to emigrate to Abyssinia.

On one occasion, the Holy Prophet went to Ṭā'if and asked them for help, saying: "I hate not one person among you, but I want you to cease your persecution. The Quraysh have decided to kill me, so help me against them in order to live and announce the message of God to the people."[104]

None of them received the Messenger. They stoned him and expelled him from Tā'if. They injured him, and his feet started bleeding on the sharp stones.

After Abū Ṭālib passed away, the Quraysh increased their oppression against the Prophet. They went on tormenting him by throwing stones over the wall into his house, and they would pour ashes on top of him when he walked along the alleys.

Once, with ashes on his head and face, he walked back home, and one of his daughters stood up before him to sweep them off from his head. Upon seeing this she cried, and the Prophet said: "O my little child, do not cry. God will surely protect your father."[105]

After the Anṣār[106] in Medina went to him and embraced Islam, they swore allegiance that if the Prophet went to Medina they would support him as their children, and would save him from his enemies, and no matter how hard the Quraysh tried, they saw that they could not prevent him from inviting the people to Islam, and day after day the Muslims were increasing in number.

In the end, the Quraysh decided to meet at Dār al-Nadwah in order to make their final decision about Muhammad.

Forty learned men came together at Dār al-Nadwah, and after long discussions, they decided to kill the Messenger. They unanimously agreed that each clan should assign a man of his tribe and then together attack Mohammad in order to eliminate him. In this way, the responsibility would be divided among them, and the Banī Hāshim could not contest with them for the blood money.

This was their conclusion, and each one chose the bravest man of his group, and together these men were to secretly enter the Prophet's house on a certain night to fulfil their mission.

These individuals took great precautions to keep the whole affair secret, and made preparations to be ready to attack at the right time. But Gabriel informed the Prophet of the oncoming case.

Concerning this, God has stated:

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you, to keep you in bonds, or slay you or expel you. They plot and plan, and Allah plans also; but the best of planners is Allah. (8:30)

Then Gabriel said to the Prophet to let Ali lie in his bed while he left Mecca for Medina.

The Holy Messenger called to Ali: "God has commanded me to migrate tonight. Now, are you ready to lie in my bed so that the unbelievers among the Quraysh take you for me and therefore be unaware of my leaving?"

Ali replied: "O Messenger of God, if I lie in your bed will you then be safe?"

The Prophet answered: "Yes."

Ali was delighted and said: "May I be sacrificed for you, for whyever not?" He immediately fell prostrate (which was the first prostration in Islam).

Ali got ready to stay at the house of the Prophet that night and prepared himself to be sacrificed for him.

In his document Ibn Athīr quotes Ibn Isaac as saying:

As the Companions of the Holy Messenger left for Medina for the second time, the Messenger was expecting Gabriel to come and order him to leave Mecca for Medina. It was when the Quraysh came together and decided to kill the Messenger that Gabriel informed him not to sleep that night but to remain vigilant.

The Prophet called Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib and told him instead of in a bed-sheet, to cover his body in the green garment of the Messenger and lie in his bed.

Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib did so, and the Messenger left the house.[107] Ibn Kathīr, through his chain of transmission, also narrated from Abī Rāfi' that when the Prophet decided to migrate, he commanded Ali to stay in Mecca and later send the family of the Prophet to Medina. He told Ali to do this, and to also see to the demands of the people who had asked about the Prophet and to return to them the deposits they had entrusted with him.

After telling Ali to lie in his bed on the night he was to leave Mecca, he said: "If the Quraysh take you for me in my bed, then they will not pursue me."

That night, the Quraysh entered the house of the Prophet and it was evident that someone was lying in the bed. As the night came to an end and there was light enough to see clearly inside the house, they approached softly, but to their surprise, they found Ali. It was then that they whispered: "Muhammad has not left Mecca, for he would have taken Ali with him."

This made them disconcerted and altogether dismayed to follow the case.

The Prophet had also told Ali to join him in Medina later. So Ali first sent the family of the Prophet to Medina, and then he too set off. As a precaution, not to be seen by the disbelievers, he walked during the dark of night and during the day hid himself until he reached his destination.

When Ali's arrival in Medina was reported to the Prophet, he said:

ادعوا إلي عليّاً

Invite Ali to me.

Their reply was:

يارسول الله لا يقدر أن يمشي

O Messenger, Ali is unable to take a single step.

Ali's Bleeding Feet after Migrating to Mecca

The Prophet himself went to visit Ali, but when he saw Ali in that state, he took Ali into his arms and embraced him. Ali's feet were swollen and bleeding because of the long journey. Feeling pity for him, the Prophet wept for him, rubbed the sores with saliva from his mouth, and prayed for his good health.

It is reported that Ali never complained of his foot injury until he was martyred.[108]

Ghundūzi says that Tha'labi narrated in his *Tafsir*, Ibn Aqaba in his *Malhama*, Abū al-Sādat in the *Faḍā'il al-'Itra al-Tāhira*, and Ghazzāli in *Ihyā al-'Ulūm*, with their chains of transmission from Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Rafi, and Hind ibn Abī Hala, the stepdaughter of the Prophet whose mother was Khadijah , that the Prophet said:[109]

قال رسول الله صلّى الله عليه و آله: أوحى الله إلى جبرئيل و ميكائيل أني آخيت بينكما و جعلت عمر أحدكما أطول من صاحبه، فأيكما يؤثر أخاه عمره؟

فكلاهما كرها الموت فأوحى الله إليهما ألا كنتما مثل وليي علي بن أبي طالب آخيت بينه و بين محمد نبيي فآثره بالحياة على نفسه ثم ظل أو رقد على فراشه يقيه بمهجته اهبطا إلى الأرض جميعا فاحفظاه من عدوه فهبط جبرئيل فجلس عند رأسه و ميكائيل عند رجليه و جعل جبرئيل يقول بخ بخ من مثلك يا ابن أبي طالب و الله يباهي بك الملائكة فأنزل الله و من الناس من يشري نفسه ابتغاء مرضات الله

God revealed to Gabriel and Michael saying that: "I have pronounced the brother-hood of you two angels, and I have prolonged the life of one of you, so which one of you is ready to give this chance to his brother?"

Both of them disliked the death and neither of them was pleased to give long life to the other.

Then, God revealed to them:

> I have pronounced the brotherhood of My Messenger, Mohammad, and My Guardian, Ali, and Ali has sacrificed his life to Mohammad. He put his life in danger by lying in his bed, and was prepared to save Mohammad by sacrificing himself for the good of the earth and all people, and to defend him against his enemies.

Both angels descended to the earth, and Gabriel sat next to Ali and began praising him with such words as: "May all praise be to you, son

of Abū Ṭālib. Because of your self-sacrifice, God, the most honorable and exalted, is well-pleased."

Then, this verse was revealed to the Prophet concerning Ali's dignity:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللهِ وَاللهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

And among mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah has compassion upon His servants. (2:207)

It is said in the narrations that when the Messenger left Mecca he went directly to a cave called Thawr, and was hiding there for three days. During that time, some spiders had made thick webs in front of the cave and the pigeons had made their nests there.

The enemies approached the cave, but God prevented his enemies from entering it.

Previously, at the time of Laylat al-Mabit (the night Ali lay in the Prophet's bed), and the quarrelsome people had come together from the different tribes with the intention of killing him, Abū Lahab stopped them, saying: "No, this is not fair; there are women and children in this house, but you should guard the house carefully so that Mohammad does not run away."

It was morning, and all the enemies rushed inside the house. Then suddenly Ali took the green sheet away and stood up. They said: "O Ali, where is the Messenger?"

He said: "Why! Did you think that he would be with me?"

It was then they understood that the Prophet had already left the place, so they searched for him everywhere, but God kept him safe.

Sibṭ ibn Juzi said the following:

In the *Fazḍā'il*, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says:

It is narrated from Hammād, through Abū 'Awāna, Abū Bakr ibn Muhammad, from 'Amr ibn Maymūn who said:

I was sitting with Ibn 'Abbās when a group came with Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, then, Ibn 'Abbās said:

لما هجر رسول الله صلّ الله عليه و آله، لبس عليٌّ عليه السلام ثوبه و نام على فراشه، وكان المشركون يؤذون رسول الله صلّ الله عليه و آله إلى أن قال:

وبات الكفار، يرمون علياً عليه السلام بالحجارة وهو يتضوّر قد لفّ رأسه في الثوب إلى الصباح

When the Prophet left, Ali dressed in his garment and lay in his bed; and as it was the habit of the disbelievers to hurt the Prophet, they started throwing stones at Ali, and Ali, in order to protect himself, hid his head under the sheet until it was morning.

And he goes on by saying that Ali composed a poem that night, as follows:

وَقَيْتُ بِنَفْسِي خَيْرَ مَنْ وَطِئَ الْحَصَا وَمَنْ طَافَ بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ وَبِالْحِجْرِ
رَسُولُ الْإِلٰهِ خَافَ أَنْ يَمْكُرُوا بِهِ فَنَجَّاهُ ذُو الطَّوْلِ الْعَلِيُّ مِنَ الْمَكْرِ
وَبَاتَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ فِي الْغَارِ آمِناً مُوَقًّى وَفِي حِفْظِ الْإِلٰهِ وَفِي سِتْرِ
وَبِتُّ أُرَاعِيهِمْ وَمَا يَبْتَنُونَنِي وَقَدْ وَطَّنَتْ نَفْسِي عَلَى الْقَتْلِ وَالْأَسْرِ

I take care of the Messenger, and I follow him in obedience,
Like one who circumambulates the Ka'ba and the Ḥijr.
The Prophet (s) feared that they might deceive him [that night],
But We saved him out of danger with Our might,
And God's Messenger passed the night safely in the fissure.
It was God's Will to save him in that enclosure;
He cut him off from their plan and hazard;
He saved him from being killed or captured.[110]

And also according to Ibn Juzi, Ḥassān ibn Thābit has said regarding the Night of Migration:

مَنْ ذَا بِخَاتَمِهِ تَصَدَّقَ رَاكِعاً وَأَسَرَّهَا فِي نَفْسِهِ اسْرَاراً
مَنْ كَانَ بَاتَ عَلَى فِرَاشِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَمُحَمَّدٌ اسْرَى يَؤُمُّ الْغَارَا
مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ سُمِّيَ مُؤْمِناً فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ تُلِينُ غَرَارَا

He who donated his ring while he was praying,
And knows divine secrets and keeps them in his heart,
It is he who came to be in the bed of Mohammad
When Mohammad traveled by night and slept in the cave;
It is he, who is named "the Believer" in the Qur'an,
In nine verses that bring tranquility.

And Sayyed Ismā'il Ḥimyari has said:

وسرى بمكة حين بات مبيته ومضى بروعةِ خائفٍ مترقبِ خير البرية هارباً من شرها بالليل مكتتماو
لم يستصحبِ

باتوا وبات على الفراش ملفقاً فيرون ان محمداً لم يذهبِ.

Ali had lain in the best of beds and passed the night alone there in his room to save the Prophet, who migrated from Mecca [to Medina] in the darkness in the deep of night. He knew he might have been accosted at any moment, but still he kept on walking.

The Prophet (s) thence set out at night; he walked forward though he was afraid lest he would be stopped and killed; he hid and walked without having a friend with him.

The disbelievers among the Quraysh slept the night, and Ali slept in the bed of the Messenger; he [Ali] was wrapped in the Messenger's garment so that the disbelievers did not know that the Messenger had already gone.[111]

Lesson Seven:
The Position of the Imamate as Being Above That of Prophethood

LESSON SEVEN

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

وجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ.

And We appointed among them leaders, giving guidance under Our command, when they became steadfast and believe firmly in Our revelations. (32:24)

The Position of Imamate Is Higher Than That of Prophethood

Concerning this verse, we discuss the concept of the Imam, its meaning, and what *giving guidance under Our command* is. In addition there is an explanation of what being steadfast and having firm belief in the revelations implies in the case of the Imamate in the above-mentioned verse.

To explain the Imam clearly we have to refer to the following verse:

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ.

And remember when his Lord tried Abraham with [His] commands, and he fulfilled them. He said: "Lo! I have appointed you a leader for mankind." (Abraham) said: "And of my offspring (will there be leaders)?" He said: "My covenant includes not wrongdoers." (2:124)

As we can see, Abraham asked: "Do you also assign my offspring as Imams?" to which God answered, *My covenant includes not the wrongdoers.*

The Imamate that God gave Abraham was at the period of his old age, for according to this verse, it was after his being "tried." And the most remarkable trial for Abraham was being told to sacrifice his son Ishmael, who along with Isaac, had been given by

God to Abraham when both he and his wife were quite old. As the Qur'an states:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

Praise be to Allah Who has given me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac. Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of prayer. (14:39)

Thus it becomes clear that when Abraham asked regarding the position of his offspring whether they would be "leaders of mankind" that this was granted in his old age. It would otherwise seem inappropriate and out of the question for anyone without hope of having any children to ask such a question.

Such a person would have to either completely reconsider such a prayer, or at least say: "If You desire, due to my dismay, would You please give the position of the Imamate to my offspring, should You give any children to me?"

The reason for Abraham's lack of offspring is explained the Qur'an:

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُونَ قَالُوا لَا تَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ، قَالَ أَبَشَّرْتُمُونِي عَلَى أَنْ مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشِّرُونَ؟ قَالُوا بَشَّرْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْقَانِطِينَ».

And tell them of Abraham's guests. How when they entered upon him, and said: "Peace." He said: "Lo! We are afraid of you." They said: "Fear not! We give you glad tidings of a son endowed with wisdom." He said: "Do you give me glad tidings that old age has seized me? Of what then do you bring me good tidings?" They said: "We give you good tidings in truth: be not then in despair." (15:51–55)

Abraham's wife Sara had also lost hope of having a child, as it is stated:

وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَقَ يَعْقُوبَ قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَى أَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحْمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ».

And his wife, standing by, laughed when We gave her good tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob.

She said: "O, woe is me! Shall I bear a child while I am an old woman and this my husband is an old man? Indeed, this is a strange thing!" They said: "Do you wonder at Allah's command? The mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you people of the house! He is indeed worthy of all praise, full of all glory!" (11:71–73)

These verses clearly illustrate Abraham's dismay at the possibility of having children in old age, and that his request for the Imamate to be invested in his offspring coincided with the time he himself was given the position of Imam. That is, it happened when God honored him in his old age as well as Ishmael and Isaac

Therefore, we conclude that Abraham's investment with the Imamate occurred when he was elderly and after he was already a Prophet. This indicates that the Imamate is something other than prophethood, and its position supersedes that of prophethood. Thus, the verse, *I assign you a leader (Imam) for mankind*, means: "I am appointing you as a leader so that the people will follow you."

So what is that Imam whom the people are to follow and refer to in their affairs, thoughts, and beliefs?

Some interpreters have been mistaken on this question and have imagined that the "Imam" in this verse means the very state of prophethood, and since people follow the Prophet and obey him in their affairs, they point to the following verse as a proof:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

And We sent no messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's leave. (4:64)

This interpretation is quite baseless, because the meaning of the "Imam" in the phrase, *I assign you as an Imam for the people* is the indirect object of *I assign you*, and as the doer is in the nominative case, it is the same as if it were in the past: it does not take an object. Therefore it applies equally to the present or the future.

It effectively means: "O Abraham, from now on, I assign you as the Imam." As Abraham was already a Prophet when this was revealed to him, it can be clearly understood that the Imamate is quite distinct from prophethood.

Apart from that, *I assign you as the Imam* is Divine Revelation, which does not occur outside prophethood. Thus Abraham had been a Prophet before being assigned as the Imam; hence here the Imamate does not mean the same thing as prophethood.

We have also mentioned that the position of Imamate was given to Abraham during his old age, after he was tested by the possibility

of sacrificing his son Ishmael. Therefore, prior to this he had certainly been a Prophet. This is because, before he had children, when the angels were passing his territory to destroy the people of Lot, they went to him as a Prophet. So it can be easily understood that he was a Prophet at that time.

The only reason that these interpreters make this mistake is that they read the word "Imam" incorrectly when they encounter it in different places. Therefore, they have believed that they can designate as "Imam" anyone who has an important position or function, and as a Prophet has preference, he can also be taken as the Imam.

So those who have translated "Imam" in this verse as "apostle," "Messenger," "Guardian," "leader" or "Daliph" are mistaken, because these titles are more or less derived from *naba'*, which means "news."

"*Nabi*" (the bringer of news) is one whom God informs of his inner being, and this is other than "Imam"—and he is one who has the responsibility of propagation. People are not obliged to take him as a leader and obey him openly or in secret, listening to him and acting upon what he says. So the meaning of *nabi* is not that of Imam. And *muṭā'* (the one who is obeyed) means "one who is in the position where the people obey him," which is also something unrelated to the Imamate.

The caliph and Guardian carry the meaning of "representative," and he is one who is in authority and whose orders must be obeyed, and neither of these words means the same as "Imam." Imam is derived from the Arabic for "origin," and as mentioned earlier, it means "to be followed," and the absolute Imam is one who, in all aspects of life—at rest, in motion, whilst asleep or awake, both apparently and in secret, in speech and behavior, morality and belief—must be followed by all people and obeyed in all aspects.

As we see in the verse in question, the meaning of the Imam is indeed praiseworthy, because, after Abraham had already attained the state of prophethood and had propagated God's message to the people, God effectively said to him: "Now I have made you an Imam for them to obey in all aspects of life."

However, neither of the foregoing words can mean "Imam" (after attaining the position of prophethood), since it would be inappropriate to say: "I have appointed you as a Prophet, a Messenger, a caliph, a Guardian and a master."

And it should be understood that the distinction between the word "Imam" and the others is not strictly verbal, but mainly in its sense, which the other terms lack.

Now that this has been clarified, let us take a look at the relevant verse again and examine it:

وجعلنا منهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا لما صبروا وكانوا بآياتنا يوقنون

And We appointed from among them leaders to guide (people) at Our command, because they acted patiently and were convinced of Our signs.

Here we see that the word *leaders* is accompanied by the adjectival attribute *to guide at Our command*. In another verse, there is the same thing regarding the story of Abraham:

ووهبنا له اسحق ويعقوب نافلة وكلا جعلنا صالحين وجعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا وأوحينا إليهم فعل الخيرات وإقام الصلوة وإيتاء الزكوة وكانوا لنا عابدين».

And We made them leaders who guide at Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the right establishment of worship and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone). (21:73)

In this verse, too, the word *leaders* is accompanied by the adjectival attribute *at Our command*. In other words, the clause *who guide at Our command* explains the word *leaders*.

Therefore, the Imamate always carries the meaning of "guidance," and this guidance is at God's command; that is to say that the Imam is one who guides the people at the command of God. The main meaning of "at God's command" is explained well in the following verses:

انما امره اذا اراد شيئا ان يقول له كن فيكون فسبحان الذى بيده ملكوت كل شىء وإليه ترجعون».

Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is only that He says to it, "Be!" and it is. So glory be to Him in Whose hand is the dominion over all things! Unto Him you will be brought back. (36:82–83)

and:

وما أمرنا إلا واحدة كلمح بالبصر

And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye. (54:50)

First of all, these verses indicate that God's command is but one, not several, and therefore not temporal or restricted. Secondly, as soon as God makes His command and wills for something to be, it comes into existence, and is therefore the celestial existence (*malakūt*) of each creature. When God wills to create a thing with His command, which is the celestial existence of the thing, He brings it into existence. It is clear that this command is constant, as opposed to changeable and perishable creation. As this verse states:

أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

...His verily is all creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. (7:54)

Thus, creatures have two aspects: one that is material and exterior and constantly perishes, and an inner one that is stable and imperishable, and that is in fact its reality and undergoes no change in its nature.

The Guidance of Creatures Is with the Imams

The Imams have the authority to guide all beings by the command of God, for they have close contact with their celestial aspects and may guide each being to God in order that they may reach His perfection.

The heart of all creatures is with the Imam, as he has full knowledge of them and can direct them towards God.

Therefore, the Imam who guides people to God does so with the Divine command that is always with him. In fact, this is done by the Divine power invested in the Imam and the nature of guardianship over the inner aspect that every individual possesses. This is the meaning of the Imam, and the cause of this station is stated in the following verse as:

لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

...when they became steadfast and believed firmly in Our signs. (32:24)

This refers to steadfastness in the cause of God, and indicates patience, perseverance, and resistance to all the trials faced on the way to reaching the goal, as well as the certainty of firm belief.

In some verses of the Qur'an we see the sign of certainty described as an "unveiling of the veil of the Divine," with the

"veiled" referring to one whose heart is covered and cannot see the Divine Light. We might consider the following:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ

Thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty. (6:75)

This verse demonstrates that the showing of the Dominion of the Heavens and Earth gave Abraham this certainty in his heart, a certainty that is not separate from the Divine Light. And in this verse:

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ

Nay, would that you knew (now) with a sure knowledge! For you will behold hell fire! (102:5–6)

This means that you would see the ugliest scenes of the sinners in Hell.

And similarly these verses say:

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عِلِّيُّونَ كِتَابٌ مَرْقُومٌ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ.

Nay, but the record of the righteous is in illiyūn. *And what will convey to you what* illiyūn *is. A written record, attested by those who are brought near (to their Lord).* (83:18–21)

Those who are brought near (to their Lord) in these verses are those with certainty, and who are connected to the celestial. Their hearts have excelled above terrestrial sight, are not veiled from God, and are free from ignorance, sin, doubt, and hypocrisy. They have attained certainty and can witness the Kingdom and the good and the pious therein, as well as the wicked and sinful who inhabit Hell.

Therefore, the Imam who is guiding the people to divinity should certainly have this certainty, and the key to the Divine Kingdom must be within his reach; he must be well-informed of the Names and attributes of God.

As already mentioned, the Divine Kingdom is the true aspect of creatures, so this verse says:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا

And We made them leaders who guide by Our command... (21:73).

This verse clearly explains what this guidance is. Those with pure hearts and good deeds are with the Imam; their Divine aspect and command is with the Imam, and they never leave him even for a single moment.

The Reliability of Imam Ali Regarding the Station of Imam and Guardianship (*Wilāyah*)

The many titles with which the Prophet honored Ali are enough to prove his position as Guardian.

Ghundūzi has narrated that the Prophet said

يا عَلِيُّ انتَ تُبرِءُ ذِمَّتي وَ انتَ خَليفَتي عَلى امَّتي

O Ali, it is you who should pay my due and be the caliph of my nation.[112]

It is obvious that the phrase "should pay my due" does not mean that Ali owes some money to the Prophet and is being asked to return it, but rather to fulfil the covenant of prophethood that the Prophet pledged, and announce it to guide the people to God. The narration goes on:

> O Ali, it is you who are going to fulfil it, and I know that you have a strong determination to do so. For you possess the Holy Spirit, and you know well the souls of the children of Adam, and are acquainted with the speech and actions of the people.

There are also similar narrations, such as: "O Ali, you are the one who is going to pay back my debts."

Through his chain of transmission, Ibn Jawzi narrates a document from Anas where Ahmad Ḥanbal said:

> We said to Salmān Farsi: Do ask the Prophet who is going to be his inheritor.

فسأل سلمان رسول الله صلّ الله عليهِ و آلهِ، فقال: من كان وصيّ موسى بن عِمران؟ فقال يوشع بن نونٍ قال: إنّ وصيّي و وارثي و منجزوعدي عليُّ بن أبيطالب عليهِ السّلام.

So Salmān asked the Prophet (s), and in response he said: "Who was the guardian for Mūsā ibn Imrān?" Salmān answered: "Yousha ibn Noun."

So the Prophet said: "My Guardian, my inheritor and the payer of my debts is going to be Ali, the son of Abī Ṭālib."[113]

Ibn Jawzi added: If they consider this *hadith* weak, we answer that it is because of Ismā'il ibn Ziyād in its chain. Dārquṭnī asserts that this is because Ismā'il added the following words of his own:

وهو خير من أترك بعدي

Ali is the best man I am leaving with you. He is the best man after me.

The Story of Anas Regarding the Guardianship of Ali

The story narrated from Ahmad Ḥanbal does not include Ibn Ziyād in its chain, nor does it have the additional words, since they are two different stories unrelated to each other.[114]

It is narrated by Abū Nu'aym Hāfiz Iṣfahānī and Shaykh al-Islam Ḥamwīnī that Anas said that the Prophet said to him:

قال رسول الله صلّ الله عليه: يا انس، اسكب لي وضوءاً، ثمّ قام وصلّي ركعتين،

ثمّ قال: أوّل من يدخل عليك مِن هذا البابِ، امير المؤمنين، وسيّد المسلمون، وقاعد الغرّ المحجلين،

وخاتم الوصِيين.

قال انس قلت: أللهمّ اجعله رجلاً مِن الانصارِ، وكتمته، إذ جاء عليٌ،

، قال: من هذا يا انس؟

فقلت: عليٌ، فقام مستبشِراً فأعتنقه، ثمّ جعل يمسح عرق وجههِ بوجههِ، ويمسح عرق عليٌ بِوجههِ،

قال عليّ: يا رسول اللهِ لقد رأيتك صنعت شيأً ما صنعت بي مِن قبل.

قال: ولا يمنعني وأنت تؤدي عنّي، وتسمعهم صوتي، وتبيّن لهم ما اختلفوا فيه بعدي.

O Anas! Prepare for me some water [to perform ablution]. Then he stood up to say two units (*rak'ats*) of prayer.

He then said:

> O Anas! The first man who is going to enter through this door is the Commander and Leader of the Believers, the Master and the Chief of the Muslims; he is foremost and noble with his illuminating face in Paradise where the Creator has secured a place for him, and he is going to be my Guardian.

I thought: "O Lord! I wish that person was from Anṣār," while I kept secret my wish. Then all of a sudden Ali entered and the Prophet

asked me: "O Anas! Who is he?" I answered: "He is Ali." With a cheer the Prophet stood up and hugged him and was kissing his face; he wetted Ali's face with the running sweat on his face, and wetted his own face with Ali's.

Ali said: "O Messenger of God, you did a good deed to me such as you had not done before."

The Prophet said: "What is going to stop me withholding this from you? It is you who is going to replace me and for my voice to reach the world; it is you who is going to settle peace among the hostile parties."[115]

Abū Nu'aym Hāfiz, through his authentic chain, has narrated from Abū Barzah al-Aslami that the Prophet said:

إِنَّ اللهَ عَهِدَ إِلَيَّ عَهْداً فِي عَلِيٍّ فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَبِّ بَيِّنْهُ لِي.
فَقَالَ اسْمَعْ فَقُلْتُ سَمِعْتُ فَقَالَ إِنَّ عَلِيّاً رَايَةُ الْهُدَى وَإِمَامُ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ وَنُورُ مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي وَهُوَ الْكَلِمَةُ الَّتِي
أَلْزَمْتُهَا الْمُتَّقِينَ مَنْ أَحَبَّهُ أَحَبَّنِي وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَهُ أَبْغَضَنِي فَبَشَّرْتُهُ بِذَلِكَ فَجَاءَ عَلِيٌّ فَبَشَّرْتُهُ بِذَالِكَ،
فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ: أَنَا عَبْدُ اللهِ وَفِي قَبْضَتِهِ فَإِنْ يُعَذِّبْنِي فَبِذُنُوبِي وَإِنْ يُتِمَّ الَّذِي بَشَّرَتْنِي بِهِ فَاللهُ أَوْلَى بِي.
قَالَ فَقُلْتُ: اللَّهُمَّ اجْلُ قَلْبَهُ وَاجْعَلْ رَبِيعَهُ الْإِيمَانَ،
فَقَالَ اللهُ تبارك و تعالي: قَدْ فَعَلْتُ بِهِ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ رَفَعَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ سَيَضُمُّهُ بِالْبَلَاءِ.
فَقُلْتُ يَا رَبِّ! إِنَّهُ أَخِي وَصَاحِبِي،
فَقَالَ تعالي: إِنَّهُ شَيْءٌ قَدْ سَبَقَ أَنَّهُ مُبْتَلًى وَمُبْتَلًى بِهِ

God, Glory to Him, has made a covenant with me regarding Ali, and I requested the Lord to explain it to me. Ali is the banner of guidance, the Imam of the saints, and the light for those who follow me.

He is the Divine statement that accompanies me with the pious; he who loves him, loves me; whoever hates him, hates me. Then God told me to inform Ali of this good news, and Ali entered and I informed him.

He said: "O Messenger of God, I am the slave and the obedient worshipper of God, so if He chastise me it is because of the sins I have committed, and if He fulfils this covenant which He has made with me, still He has authority over me, and so He is my Guardian."

Then the Prophet said: "O Creator! Brighten his heart and assign him as the source of belief."

Then God, the Blessed and Exalted, said: "I accept your prayer and I have done with him what you implore."

Then He said: "I have assigned the hardest calamity and the harshest tests for him!"

I said: "O my Creator! But he is my brother and the caliph." Then God, the Most High, stated: "This is the decree that has already occurred: Ali will face severe calamities, and the people too will be tested for having such an Imam."

The Slyness of the Quraysh with Ali

Ghundūzi has narrated from the book *Manāqib* by Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī and Ḥamwīnī, and from his document from Abī 'Uthmān Nahdi down from Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib:[116]

قال: كنت أمشي مع رسول الله صلّى الله عليه و آله وسلّم، فآتينا على حديقة فاعتنقني واجهش باكياً فقلت: ما يبكيك يا رسول الله؟

فقال: أبكي لضغائن في صدور قوم لا يبدونها لك إلّا بعدي!

فقلت في سلامة من ديني؟

فقال: في سلامة من دينك.

Ali said: "I was walking along with the Prophet when we entered a garden, and there the Prophet hugged me and started crying."

I was surprised and asked him why he was crying, and he said: "I remember the jealousy and rancor of the people against you; they will not reveal it until I have passed away!"

I asked him: "O Messenger of God, my faith, then, is untouched? Shall I not be involved with carnal desires? Shall I not be desirous for the position against the will of God? Shall I remain in this situation as I am now?"

He said: "Yes, your faith will be safe and sound then."[117]

They have also narrated a composition from Ali:

تِلْكُمْ قُرَيْشٌ تَمَنَّانِي لِتَقْتُلَنِي فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ مَا بَرُّوا وَلَا ظَفِرُو
إِنْ عِشْتُ فَإِنِّي لَسْتُ مُتَّخِذاً أَهْلَاً وَلَا شِيعَةً فِي الدِّينِ إِذْ فَجَرُوا
قَدْ بَايَعُونِي وَلَمْ يُوفُوا بِبَيْعَتِهِمْ وَمَا كَرُونِي فِي الْأَعْدَاءِ إِذْ مَكَرُو

It was this nation of Quraysh who wanted to kill me;
By my Lord, they never overcame me, nor were they victorious.
If I have any chance to live, I am not such a man, as to choose any of these people to be my followers or companion.

They swore allegiance to me but remained disloyal to their pledge; when the enemies were playing tricks against me, they too cooperated, and all of them practiced the ugliest tricks against me.[118]

Lesson Eight:
The Imam's Genesis and Guardianship, with the Permission of Allah, upon Auspicious and Wretched People

LESSON EIGHT

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍ بِاِمَامِهِمْ، فَمَنْ اُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَاُولٰئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا. وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هٰذِهِ اَعْمٰى فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا.

(Think of) the Day when We shall summon all mankind with their (respective) Imams [leaders]; then those who are given their books in their right hands will read their books and will not be wronged as much as a date-thread. And whoever is blind (to things) in this world will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further from the path. (17:71–2)

There are two aspects of all creatures, including man's actions: one is the corporeal aspect, which is exterior, visible, and sensible, and the other is celestial, and is inward and invisible.

The exterior aspect comes into existence through the celestial aspect, just as man's actions become reality through his will and desire. The Imam is one who is able to lead man's celestial existence to God, and this is not temporal and corporeal, but through the guidance of God. This is made clear in the following verse, which describes them as such:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِاَمْرِنَا.

And We made them leaders who guide by Our command. (21:73)

This verse implies that whatever relates to the guidance of the heart and activity is in the Imam's charge, and that is to say that inward facts are not hidden from him.

This mission of the Imams involves knowledge of the Divine secrets that are given to them.

The Status of the Imamate Is Above Prophethood in General

In the book of Kāfi it is narrated from Imam Sādiq that:

انَّ اللهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ اتَّخَذَ ابراهيمَ عَبداً قَبلَ انْ يَتَّخِذَهُ نَبِيّاً وَإنَّ اللهَ اتَّخَذَهُ نَبِيّاً قَبلَ انْ يَتَّخِذَهُ رَسولاً، وَإنَّ اللهَ اتَّخَذَهُ رَسولاً قَبلَ انْ يَتَّخِذَهُ خَليلاً، وَانَّ اللهَ اتَّخَذَهُ خَليلاً قَبلَ إنْ يَتَّخِذَهُ اماماً، فَلَمّا جَمَعَ لَهُ الأشياء قالَ: انّي جاعِلُكَ لِلنّاسِ اماماً. قالَ: فَمِنْ عِظَمِها فِي عَيْنِ ابْراهيمَ قالَ: وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتي؟ قالَ لا يَنالُ عَهْدِي الظّالِمينَ قالَ: لا يَكونُ السَّفيهُ امامَ التَّقِيِّ.

> Certainly God, the Most Honorable and Exalted, chose Abraham as an obedient servant before choosing him as a Prophet, and God chose him as a Prophet before choosing him as a Messenger, and God chose him as a Messenger before choosing him as His friend, and finally He chose him as His friend before choosing him as a Leader. When all these things came to reality, God then said: "I assign you as a Leader for the people." So Abraham asked: "And what of my offspring?" Said He: "My covenant is not with the wrongdoers—they cannot be leaders for the pious."[119]

Though prophethood involves having a connection with the Kingdom and receiving revelations from Gabriel, the implication of the messengerhood is stronger still, and implies a connection with the angels. However, they may not have full authority over the kingdom of men to lead them to completion, whereas the Imam has this dominion and surrounds the hearts and leads them to perfection.

The real authority of the Prophets, the pious, and the saints is to guide the people and propagate the revelations.

It is stated:

قالَ اللهُ تعالي: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ.

And We have not sent any messenger save with the language of his people, that he might make (the message) clear to them. Then Allah sends whom He will astray, and guides whom He will. (14:4)

This verse shows the extent of the Prophets' duties, which is simply to teach the people, whereas the Imam leads and guides the people through his influence on the hearts with God's permission.

Concerning this, He has stated:

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ

And he who believed said: "O my people! Follow me. I will show you the way of right conduct." (40:38)

He has also said:

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may be aware. (9:122)

The Meaning of the Imam

The sayings of the jurisprudents and scholars are authentic not because of their high status, for they never have the status of the Imams. The Imam is one who attains certainty, discovers the Divinity, and receives knowledge of the universe; the kernel of things becomes clear to him, and he reads the hearts of the people in order to be able to lead and direct them.

The "command" is the very same permission through which the great Messengers perform miracles, such as raising the dead and so forth.

Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the Children of Israel:

أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُم بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُم مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

Indeed, I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, for I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by Allah's leave: and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead, by Allah's leave. And I declare to you what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Surely therein is a sign for you, if you are believers. (3:49)

In this verse the people are told that the extraordinary things performed by Jesus were done by the permission of God, and as the permission of God is reliable, although out of the ordinary, Jesus was thus given the Divine authority to be conversant about such things. He was given the Divine power to change the nature of

things without external help: to raise the dead and to heal leprosy and blindness.

The Imam Must Have the Divine Power to Handle Affairs

The Imams must certainly have this power in order to be leaders of nations and guide them to perfection, both apparently and in secret. They guide and direct to perfection not only good people, but also the wretched. They lead all people in a similar fashion.

As it is stated:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَؤُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا.

(Think of) the Day when We shall summon all mankind with their (respective) Imams [leaders]; then those who are given their books in their right hands will read their books and will not be wronged as much as a date-thread. And whoever is blind (to things) in this world will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further from the path. (17:71–72)

We should note that these verses tell us that all people, wherever they may be and at all times, have an Imam to lead them, because it is emphatically stated *...the Day when We shall summon all mankind with their leaders.* So there has always been an Imam for both good and bad people, who will either enter Heaven through him or be led to the fire. Those with a good record are given it in their right hands, whilst the others are the wicked who, as the Qur'an tells us, are given their books in their left hands.

It is stated:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا.

Then whoso is given his account in his right hand will truly receive an easy reckoning. (84:7–8)

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا.

But whoso is given his account behind his back, he surely will cry out for destruction. (84:10–11)

These two groups are the same people of the right hand and the left hand who are found in every tribe, and who reach this state through their Imams or leaders. Therefore the meaning of "two tribes" indicates all the people with or without a legitimate Imam.

However, if we divide the people into three groups and also include the Imams, we have the blessed intimate ones, the people of the right hand and those of the left:

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

Then (there will be) the People of the Right Hand; who will be the People of the Right Hand? (56:8)

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ

And the People of the Left Hand; who will be the People of the Left Hand? (56:9)

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

And those Foremost (in faith) will be Foremost (in the Hereafter): they are the ones brought nigh (to Allah) in gardens of bliss. (56:10–12)

Since they are:

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ

Firmly established in the presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent... (54:55)

these latter will have used their time in the world well, when others were busy with their material desires; they were seeking to perfect themselves and were inwardly supplicating their Creator, and the Imams would certainly be among this group.

However, the people of the right hand are the good, whose actions have been wise and according to logic and the command of the Imam. They have not violated the rights of others, have been honest and trustworthy, and diligent in prayer and good deeds. They are therefore the people of Paradise, whose accounts are put in their right hands—a metaphor for their happiness and victory and reception of God's blessing.

However, as their hearts have been partly veiled, and they have not been able to eliminate their concerns for things other than God and overlook the deceitful ornaments of the world, they must be questioned, for they have no place with the "foremost."

Conversely, the people of the "left hand" are those who have not practiced the commands of the Prophets, and have fought against themselves and have thus harmed themselves with bad actions, such as lying and committing crimes. Their book of accounts will be given in their left hands, which is a metaphor for their

wickedness. Good and blessed deeds are done by the believers, and crimes and wickedness by the unbelievers, and all people will enter either Heaven or Hell under the supervision of their Imams, since they are aware of the inner aspect of people's actions.

Hence, it is narrated that:

عليٌ قسيم الجنةِ والنارِ

Ali is the divider [criterion] of Heaven and Hell.[120]

These words are not only narrated by the Household, but have been also narrated by Sunnis, and there follow three interpretations of this narration which are related to each other, with comments on their genesis and secrecy.

The Meaning of the Narrations That Ali Is the Divider of Heaven and Hell

First of all, practically speaking, we should know that Ali has been assigned the position of Guardianship and the Imamate by God, and his words and actions are proof of this; so, not only the Muslims but also all of humanity should follow his command in all aspects of life.

Therefore, whoever obeys him is completely honest, a man of truth and *jihad* who sacrifices his soul for the sake of him. It is obvious that such a man would abide in Paradise, because Paradise is the outcome of the good deeds one does in this world. But anyone who does not follow him and rejects his mission by lying, treachery, giving short measures, drinking wine, trespassing beyond limits, sensuality, meanness, and rejection of the mentioning of God definitely dwells in the Fire, since Hell is the outcome of the actions of sinners. Thus, what separates these two groups is basically whether they follow or reject Imam Ali's *wilāyah*.

In this sense Ali is thus the divider of Paradise and Hell, like a teacher who trains students; he teaches them and some of them learn, whereas some absent themselves or sit idle and do not learn. In the end the teacher accepts the obedient but rejects the others. So it is right to say that the teacher sends some of them to a higher position, while others remain ignorant.

Second, there is the question of love and spite. The spirit of an action should be based on love, so those who have no love effectively have a hatred of Ali. In a sense they are too far away, because one who loves something also loves its effects. Those who love Ali certainly appreciate what he says and his nature. However,

those who take Ali as their enemy naturally express unpleasant behavior towards him. This is because good acts create love and light in the heart, but evil brings darkness and enmity. Therefore, the friends of Ali are naturally enlivening: their hearts are pure, and their souls are always bright; and his enemies are far from the truth and unpleasant: their hearts are dark, and they are fatigued by their contaminated souls.

The outcome of good deeds is happiness, radiance in the heart, and love of God, while the result of evil deeds is darkness, enmity, and God's disapproval. Therefore, Ali divided the people into two groups, one loving and one hateful—the people of Paradise and the people of Hell.

Ghundūzi Ḥanafi narrates of Abū Salt Hirawi that Ma'mūn asked Imam Ali ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā:

"Tell me why it is said that your great grandfather is called the divider of Paradise and Hell?"
Imam Riḍā replied: "Is it not you who are quoting your grandfather, who has narrated:

سمعت رسول الله يقول: حب عليًا ايمانٌ وبغضه كفرٌ.

'I heard it from the Messenger of God, who said the love of Ali was faith, and spite towards him is disbelief'?"

He replied: "Yes." Then Imam Riḍā said: "As Paradise is the place for the believers and Hell for the disbelievers, then if the division between Paradise and Hell is based on love or spite against Ali, so the divider between Paradise and Hell is Ali."

Ma'mūn said:

لا أبقاني الله بعدك إنك وارثُ جدِّك رسول الله

"May God not let me live after your death! For how would I deal with the problems flooding over me? Truly, you are the inheritor of your grandfather."And Abū Salt has said: "After Ma'mūn left Imam Riḍā to go to his house, I said: 'May my soul be sacrificed to you, how well you responded to Ma'mūn!' The Imam said: 'O Abū Salt, it was a prompt answer that was put in my tongue.'"

وَلَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ أَبِي يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ عليه السلام أَنَّهُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله يَا عَلِيُّ أَنْتَ قَسِيمُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَقُولُ لِلنَّارِ هَذَا لِي وَهَذَا لَكِ.

I heard it from my father who was quoting his grandfathers that the Messenger of God had said to Ali: "O Ali, on the Day of Resurrection you are the divider between Hell and Paradise—you command those to the fire, 'This is for me, and that is for you.'"[121]

And also Khārazmī Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Makki narrates through his chain that Nāfi ibn 'Umar said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صلي الله عليه و آله لِعَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عليه السلام إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ يُؤْتَى بِكَ يَا عَلِيُّ بِسَرِيرٍ مِنْ نُورٍ وَ عَلَى رَأْسِكَ تَاجُ قَدْ أَضَاءَ نُورُهُ وَ كَادَ يَخْطِفُ أَبْصَارَ أَهْلِ الْمَوْقِفِ فَيَأْتِي النِّدَاءُ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ أَيْنَ خَلِيفَةُ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللهِ؟

فتقول: ها أنا ذا

فينادي المنادي: أدخِل من أحبّك الجنّة وأدخِل من عاداك في النّار فأنت قسيم الجنّة والنّار

The Prophet said to Ali:

O Ali, on the Day of Resurrection, they will bring you on a couch of light to the arena of the Judgment. Then, on that Day, you are to put on a crown whose light will shine all around and dazzle the eyes. In the meantime, God, the Exalted and Most Worthy of Praise, will be heard to call out: "Where is the Inheritor of Mohammad, the Prophet?" Then you are to answer: "Here I am!" Then God will command: "O Ali, let those of your friends whom you want enter Paradise, and whomever is your enemy enter Hell.' O Ali, you are thus the divider [of the people] of Paradise and of Hell."[122]

Also, Mughāzili Shāfi'ī has narrated through his chain from Ibn 'Abbās, who said:

The Prophet said:

يا علىّ إنّك قسيم الجنّة والنّار، أنت تقرع باب الجنّة وتدخلها أحبّاءك بغير حساب.

O Ali, you are the divider of Paradise and the Fire. You will knock on the gates of Paradise and enter therein with as many of your friends as you desire.[123]

The Import of "Means"

In *Farā'id al-Samtayn*, Ḥamwīnī narrates from Abū Sa'īd Khidri the following:

The Prophet said: "When you pray, ask God to honor you with the means." They asked: "O Messenger of God, what is the means?"
The Prophet replied:

It is a ladder in Paradise with a thousand rungs, of which the distance between two rungs takes one month for a fast horse to cover. One rung is made of topaz, the next is of pearl, the next one ruby, and the next emerald; then the next rung is of coral, and the next one camphor; then the next is of ambergris, one is Yemeni, and the next rung is of light and different jewels. Among the other ladders for the Prophets, this one shines as bright as the moon among the stars. Then the herald calls: "This is the rank and the ladder of Mohammad, the Seal of the Messengers." And on that Day I will wear a garment of light, and on my head is the crown of messengerhood and generosity. Ali, the son of Ṭālib, is standing by me with the banner of *al-Fātihah* in his hand, on which is written:

لا إله إلّا الله، محمّدٌ رسول الله، عليٌّ وليّ الله، واولياء عليٌّ المفلحون الفائزون بالله

There is no deity but God, Mohammad is the Prophet, Ali is His Guardian, and the friends of Ali are the victorious who are honored to be with God.[124]

Then, I climb that ladder up to the last rung and stand there. And then Ali climbs it and, holding the banner of Unity in his hand, he stands a rung below me. On that day, all the Messengers, the apostles, our friends, the martyrs and the believers raise their heads and watch us. And they say: "How fortunate are these two worshippers of God compared to us; see how much God has honored them with privilege; He has favored them with greatness by His generosity."

At that moment, the herald announces in a loud voice such that everyone hears: "This is Muhammad, the beloved of God, and this is Ali, His Guardian."

Then, the angel guarding the gate of Paradise will come and say: "O Messenger of God, my Creator has commanded me to give you the keys to Paradise." And I am to answer: "I will take the keys, but I will give them to my brother Ali."

Then the angel in charge of the Fire comes closer and says: "O Messenger of God, my Creator has commanded me to give you the keys to Hell." Again I am to answer: "I will take the keys, but I will give them to my brother Ali."

At that moment, Ali stands at the other end of Hell and takes the authority in his hand. As the fire burns and flames are rising

above, Hell calls out: "O Ali, let me be by myself! Your light has dominated my flames!"

Ali orders the Fire: "Look, this is our friend, let him go, but this is our enemy, so take him in." On that Day, when Ali commands Hell to do what he says, it obeys Ali more than your slaves obey you in this world, and that is why Ali is the divider of Paradise and Hell.[125]

It is evident that in winter, when the sun is far away from the earth and the earth loses its warmth, almost everything sleeps. The earth becomes cold and gives its energy to the vegetation. The trees wither; they bear neither leaves nor fruit. They look like dried wood, and the apple trees, and the pear, pomegranate, apricot, walnut, and fruit trees all stand bare and still, dry and motionless. They cease their activity, as if no longer alive, and they all appear like scattered wood waiting to be burnt. At that time they are dormant.

The flowers have faded away; lilies and jasmine are fragrant no more. There is no sign of life in the plants, no colorful and sweet-smelling flowers; nor can the bitter oleander be sensed.

All the birds rest in their nests, and the reptiles, snakes, and scorpions are motionless in their dens.

However, when spring approaches and the brightness of the sun gets closer to the earth and shines, and sends its enlivening warmth to the surface of the land, the dormant life of the earth becomes active. The branches of the apple trees, the blossoms of the apricot trees, and green leaves and then colorful fruits and sweet-smelling flowers beautify the gardens. The pear trees produce their own special fruit, the apricot trees their soft yellow fruit, and each different type of tree produces its own sweet, bitter, and sour fruits.

The resting birds—the nightingales, canaries and ravens—become active, and each one takes to flight in search of food. The mice, the snakes, the scorpions and other reptiles emerge from under the stones and their holes and start moving about seeking their livelihood—all this is due to the warmth of the illuminating sun.

When the sun rises, every creature begins to manifest its talents and demonstrate its secrets, whereas before they were inactive.

The sun of Guardianship (*wilāyah*) is the same. Before its rising and its illumination of the hearts, and before the question of command and prohibition, all people would live as if there were no difference between good and bad, innocence and sin, believers and unbelievers, just and unjust, or love and hatred:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

Mankind were one community... (2:213)

Without exception, all were the same, and many a time the wretched considered themselves to be better than the good and were boastful.

As soon as the sun of *wilāyah* rose and spread its rays upon the bleak souls of the nations, it made them activate their talents and secrets, and they consequently chose the blissful path so that they might reach perfection. It also caused the malice, wretchedness, and ugly thoughts of the wicked to appear with fighting and denial.

The pure-natured strengthened the path of servitude and spread humility, generosity, forgiveness, mercy, and justice, caring for orphans, rightness, loyalty, and unity (*tawḥīd*) throughout the world.

On the other hand, the wretched brought debauchery and filled up the world with ugliness, cruelty, the violation of rights, lies, aggression, and disbelief. Concerning this, it is stated:

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

...that he who perished might perish by a clear proof (of His sovereignty) and he who survived might survive by a clear proof (of His sovereignty). Indeed, Allah is the Knower, the Hearer. (8:42)

In other words, as the Imams are the spirits of the Qur'an, and the effect of the Qur'an is healing, light, and mercy for the believers; it is therefore the means of success and attainment of the utmost perfection; but for the wretched, it is the means to bring darkness, loss, ruin, and cruelty among them. Thus the Imam has this nature and effect, as it is stated:

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for believers, though it increases the evil-doers in naught save ruin. (17:82)

When the Sun of Guardianship rises, the believers' hearts, like bright lights, benefit from its warmth and illumination, with a pleasant odor that makes the whole world fragrant. But on the other hand, the hearts of the unbelievers grow tired, depressed, and dull, and their hidden fetidness comes forth from inside them, condemning their surroundings.

Concerning the inner aspect and the hearts of men, the Imam reveals the talent of everyone and directs it to move towards its desire; he directs the believer to move towards Paradise and the unbelievers to Hell. In other words, he causes every creature to move towards the path it desires. As it is stated:

وَمَامِن دَآبَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذُۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَآ إِنَّ رَبِّى عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

...There is not a moving creature that crawls, but He grasps it by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a straight path. (11:56)

For every believer there is a place and a rank in Paradise, and every unbeliever is excluded, and this is established by the Imam. He guides everyone according to his nature and genesis, belief and unbelief, and then puts the believers and the unbelievers in separate rows. Consequently, he guides them to their own merited perfection.

Hence, how aptly the Prophet said: "Ali is the divider of Paradise and Hell."

Ibn Shahr Āshūb reported that Sharik Qāḍi and 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥammād Anṣāri said that they went to A'mash when he was suffering with the illness from which he died, and in addition Ibn Shabarmeh, Ibn Abī Layl, and Abū Ḥanifa were with him. Abū Ḥanifa said to A'mash:

> O Abā Muhammad, be aware of God and consider your behavior more. Today seems like your last day in this world, and tomorrow you will enter the next. You have dishonored Ali much, and if you repent it is better for your case.
>
> A'mash said: How should I do this?
>
> Abū Ḥanifa answered: By repeating the narration of Ibāyat al-Asadi:

إِنَّ عَلِيّاً قَسِيمُ الجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ

Indeed, Ali is the divider of the [people of] Paradise and Hell.

A'mash said:

> Help me to sit and lean back, by God, to Whom my course is. Mūsā ibn Ṭarif narrated to me that the Imam Bani Asad narrated that Ibāyat ibn Rab'ī said:

I heard Ali say: I am the divider of Paradise and Hell, and I will command the fire: 'Leave him, for he is my friend, but take this one, for he is my enemy.'

سمعت علياً يقول: أنا قسيمُ النارِ أقول هذا وليي دعيهِ وهذا عدوّي خذيهِ.

And it was narrated to me that, at the time of the government of Hajjāj, Abūl Mutawakkil Nāji narrated from Abū Sa'īd Khidri from the Prophet that:

When the Day of Resurrection comes, God will enjoin Ali and me to sit by the straight path and say to us: "Let enter Paradise whoever has believed in God and has had affection towards you; and let enter the Fire whoever disbelieved in God and has been your enemy."

And Abū Wā'il told me that he heard from Ibn 'Abbās:

God's Messenger and his descendants told me: "When the Day of Resurrection approaches, God commands Ali to divide Paradise and Hell, and then to command Paradise to receive his friends and to command Hell to take his enemies."

قال: قال رسول اللهِ صلّي اللهِ عليهِ و آلِهِ: إذا كان يوم القيامة يأمر الله عليا أن يقسم بين الجنة والنار فيقول للنارِ خذي ذا عدوّي وذري ذا وليّي.

Right then, Abū Ḥanifa hung his loincloth on his shoulders and said: "So far, Abū Ḥanifa has not said a word!"[126]

Also, Ghundūzi says: In the book *Jawāhir al-Aqdayn* by Dārquṭnī it is narrated from Abī al-Ṭufayl Āmir ibn Wathilah al-Kanāni that:

إنّ علياً قال حديثاً طويلا في الشوري، وفيهِ أنّه قال لِاهلِ الشوري: فانشدكم باللهِ هل فيكم أحدٌ، قال له رسول اللهِ صلّي اللهِ عليهِ و آلِهِ: أنت قسيم النارِ والجنة غيري؟ قالوا اللّهم: لا

In the consultant assembly, Ali made a long speech to the people in which he said: 'For the sake of God, I call you to witness if there is one among you other than me to whom the Prophet has said: You are the divider of Paradise,' and they replied, 'O God, never!'

Sayyid Ismā'il Ḥimyari has many poems concerning this, such as:

قَسيمُ النارِ هذا لي فَكُفّي عَنهُ لا يَضُرُرْ

وهذا لَكَ نارٌ فحوزي الفاجرَ الأكبرَ.

Also he says:

ذاكَ قَسيمُ النارِ مِنْ قبلِهِ خُذي عَدُوّي وَذَري ناصِري
ذاكَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ ابيطالِبٍ صِهْرُ النَّبِيِّ المُصْطَفى الطّاهِرِ.

He adds:

عَلِيٌّ وَلِيُّ الحَوْضِ وَالذّائِدُ الَّذي يَذُبُّ عَنِ ارْجائِهِ كُلَّ مُجْرِمِ
عَلِيٌّ قَسيمُ النارِ مِنْ قَوْلِهِ لَها ذَري ذا وَهذا فَاشْرَبي مِنهُ وَاطْعَمي
خُذي بِالشَّوى مِنْهُمْ وَلا تَقْرَبي مَنْ كانَ حِزْبي فَتَظْلَمي.

Di'bil Khuzā'i says:

قَسيمُ الجَحيمِ فَهذا لَهُ وَهذا لَها باعْتِدالِ القِسَمْ:
يَزودُ عَنِ الحَوْضِ اعْدائَهُ وَكَمْ مِنْ لَعينٍ طَريدٍ وَكَمْ
فَمِنْ ناكِثينَ وَمِنْ قاسِطينَ وَمِنْ مارِقينَ وَمِنْ مُجْتَرَمْ.
عَلِيٌّ حُبُّهُ جُنَّةٌ قَسيمُ النارِ وَالجَنَّةِ
وَصِيُّ المُصْطَفى حَقّاً امامُ الإنسِ وَالجِنَّةِ.

That dividing of the Fire is of this chieftain;
Enough is that gain from him to me.
And this is Fire, yes, but for you;
For me it is but much impurity and pain[127]

And he also says:
The dividing of the Fire is by this head of state,
Who takes my enemy but saves my friend;
That is Ali, the Son of Abī Ṭālib,
The son-in-law of the Prophet. [128]

Di'bil Khuzā'i says:
The dividing of Hell—this is justice for him;
This is for him, for him the division
Repels his enemies, he from around the pond;
And how many so far have been driven away?
So from faithlessness and from stubborn revenge,
And from the Māriqin and from evil.[129]

Ghundūzi has said that it is narrated that the following poem was composed by Shāfi'ī:

Ali's love is getting madly thrilled,
For he is the divider of Paradise and Hell;
He is the trustee of the Prophet,
The Imam of *jinn* and mankind as well.[130]

Ibn Athīr, through his chain from Ali Ibn Jaza', says:

سمعت ابا مريم السلولي يقول: سمعت عمار بن ياسر يقول:

I heard Aba Maryam al-Salūli report that he heard Ammār ibn Yāsir say:

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله يقول لعلي بن أبي طالب:

I heard the Prophet (s) say to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib:

يا عَلِيُّ انَّ اللهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ قَدْ زَيَّنَكَ بِزِينَةٍ لَمْ يَتَزَيَّنِ الْعِبادُ بِزِينَةٍ احَبُّ اليَهِ مِنْها: الزُّهْدُ فِي الدُّنْيا، فَجَعَلَكَ لا تَنالُ مِنَ الدُّنْيا شَيْئاً، وَلا تَنالُ الدُّنْيا مِنْكَ شَيْئاً، وَوَهَبَ لَكَ حُبَّ الْمَساكِينِ، وَرَضوا بِكَ اماماً وَرَضيتَ بِهِمْ اتْباعاً،
فَطوبى لِمَنْ احَبَّكَ وَصَدَقَ فيكَ، وَوَيْلٌ لِمَنْ ابْغَضَكَ وَكَذِبَ عَلَيْكَ،
فَامَّا الَّذينَ احَبُّوكَ وَصَدَقوا فيكَ فَهُمْ جيرانُكَ فِي دارِكَ، وَرُفَقائكَ فِي قَصْرِكَ وَامَّا الَّذينَ ابْغَضوكَ وَكَذِبوا عَلَيْكَ، فَحَقٌّ عَلَى اللهِ انْ يوقِفَهُمْ مَوْقِفَ الْكَذّابينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيمَةِ

O Ali, God has sharpened you with such a sharp thing like He has never done with His other creatures; that is your detachment from the world and its affairs. Therefore, He has created you in such a way that you do not pursue the wealth and the properties of the world, and neither can the world seize anything from you. Apart from that, He has given you immense affection towards the poor and needy; and these people accept you as their approved Imam, so do you approve them as your sincere followers. Thus how lucky is one who loves you and takes positive steps, and loves you sincerely; but woe on him who takes bad steps, who lies and is always deceitful. So those who love you and take positive steps and love you sincerely are your neighbors in Paradise, and are your friends in the Divine Mansion. However, those who take bad steps, lie, and are always deceitful, are cursed by God, and

He will surely line them up with the liars on the Day of Resurrection.[131]

Lesson Nine:
On the Meaning of Inspired Guardianship

LESSON NINE

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا. وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَٰذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

(Think of) the Day when We shall summon all mankind with their (respective) Imams [leaders]; then those who are given their books in their right hands will read their books and will not be wronged as much as a date-thread. And whoever is blind (to things) in this world, will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further from the path. (17:71–2)

In many *hadith* by the followers of the Household and by a few others as well, it has been narrated that the Prophet said:

لا يجوز أحدٌ الصراط إلّا من كتب له عليٌّ الجواز.

No one can pass along the straight path until Ali gives him written permission.[132]

Research on the Hadith That No One May Travel the Straight Path until Ali Permits It

Before examining this *hadith*, we should explain the real meaning of "the straight and narrow path." To begin with, we should know that, as mentioned before, every creature has its own inner and outer aspects, and this includes mankind. Everyone has inner and outer aspects in all his activities. The outward is known as "disposition and possession," and the inward is known as "the angelic aspect" (*malakūt*). The outward is apparent, but the inward is hidden in this world.

The amount of reward or chastisement given is based on the inner and angelic aspect of actions, not on their outward aspect. For example, a person may be praying and appear agreeable, having

taken a shower and made a careful ablution, and be wearing a white prayer robe and an agate ring, and attentively reciting the necessary verses and prolonging the prostrations. Yet it is not clear whether his intention (*niyya*) at the beginning was to pray for the sake of God or simply for ostentation. Therefore, all prayers are the same in their outward form, but are different in spirit, which relies on the person's intention.

The spirit of the prayer makes it two different things: one is inward, but the other is because of an outward desire. The first one brings the person closer to God, but the second keeps him at a distance, and therefore, the first takes him to Paradise and the second leads to Hell. The same applies to fasting, *jihad*, giving alms, making the pilgrimage to Mecca, enjoining good behavior and forbidding bad, reciting the Qur'an, visiting the sick, and other such deeds that are considered good. Their rewards depend on the intention the person has in mind, for their merit differs in the sight of God.

Thus, if a man's intention is something other than God, it not only fails to bring him closer to God, but keeps him at a distance.

A sin or crime also has a spirit of its own, and its strength depends on the intention of the one who sins. One may commit a sin unintentionally, in which case the sin is not considered a "rebellion," and does not keep the person at a distance from his Lord.

The world of sense and observation is the state in which we have contact with things through our five senses. It is related to this world, but there are things that are manifest as well as hidden, like the skeleton of the body. From the point of view of those who are involved in the world, the outer impact is most important. Repetitive prayers, long fasts, making a show of piety, appearing humble in society, and speaking softly are all pleasant. However, in the world of Divinity the outer show is worthless, for it is the quality of an action and the spirit of the intention that matter. The appearance of actions vanishes and the kernel is revealed, whereas in this world, the appearance is manifest and the inward is hidden. This world is like a state of sleep, whereas the Hereafter is wakefulness.

Whatever is seen when one is awake disappears in a state of slumber, and when a man goes to bed, all the effects and qualities of this world disappear from his mind, and it seems as if he had never been in this world at all. Then, when he wakes up, this world comes alive and the previous state disappears, and it might seem to him that he had never had an experience of it.

As long as a man has not found his way to Divinity, he perceives no more than the apparent body of this world. However, when he dies, he then finds his way to the next world. It is then that the truth of things becomes clear to him, and it is this with which he will have to deal, for the state of the "witness" takes the place of "forgetfulness," giving a new appearance to things, and one can accurately perceive things that were ephemerally apparent in this world.

On the Meaning of the Straight Path

In this world a man moves towards reality with his soul, and its related attributes and deeds, since the soul returns to God on the road to the Divine.

The children of Adam are spiritually different from each other as they travel this path. Some have a straight path, for some the path more or less deviates, and some are completely misguided.

Throughout his life a man has different experiences, and his spiritual nature changes according to his actions. These conditions continually change. If his actions are praiseworthy and he behaves sincerely, and his intention is always to satisfy God, then he gradually obtains perfection after perfection, and eventually becomes one of those stationed near to God, Who casts His favor upon him.

If he has belief, but cannot forsake all falsehood, and from time to time he gives in to his desires, which hinder him for a while, but meanwhile his words and intentions are good, then he is of the people of the right hand.

If the spirit of lasciviousness is always with the person, and all his activities are contrary to the perfection of humanity, then he is of the wretched and considered to be of the people of the left hand. Therefore, these different ways that the people have lead them to diverse states—some move quickly to a state of the perfection, others more slowly, but some are led to perdition.

All these inner states become apparent on the Day of Resurrection, which is in fact the world of reality, and people have different ranks. The blazing Fire becomes real through lust, hatred, aggression, self-importance, rejection of God, and plunging into the ocean of error and sin, which is called "the life of this world" in the Qur'an.

Therefore, Hell is the inner effect of this corporeal world, whereas the straight path passes through this world with the help of man's good deeds in order to reach a good result. As a man walks

along his path in this world, he is above Hell, but he cannot walk along it more than once. Therefore everyone in the world must struggle against his passions to succeed in crossing the path to the Hereafter, and this is even necessary for the Messengers and the saints.

Consider the following verse:

وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا.

And there is not one of you but shall approach it. That is a fixed ordinance of your Lord. Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evil-doers crouching there. (19:71–72)

When this verse was sent down, the Prophet was asked: "Will you approach Hell as well?" And he answered: "Yes, but we will cross over it as swift as lightning."

All people have to descend to this world, and everyone has his own way to God, but all must approach Hell. Those who have not been enamored with the world, have not afflicted their minds, and have worshipped none but God, can pass by swiftly. The speed of other people varies according to their condition: some pass very slowly and with great caution, while others, such as the wicked, lose their balance and topple down into the Fire.

It is narrated by 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet said:

يَرِدُ النَّاسُ النَّارَ ثُمَّ يَصْدُرُونَ بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ فَأَوَّلُهُمْ كَلَمْعِ الْبَرْقِ ثُمَّ كَمَرِّ الرِّيحِ ثُمَّ كَحُضْرِ الْفَرَسِ ثُمَّ كَالرَّاكِبِ ثُمَّ كَشَدِّ الرَّجُلِ ثُمَّ كَمَشْيِهِ

At first, all people will enter the Fire; then, according to their good deeds, they will come out of it: the first ones will come out as swift as lightning, the next ones will come as the wind blows, then some will come out like the trot of a horse, and others as if they were walking, running or riding a horse.[133]

In Qumī's *al-Tafsir*, it is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq:

الصِّرَاطُ أَدَقُّ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ وَأَحَدُّ مِنَ السَّيْفِ، فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمُرُّ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلَ الْبَرْقِ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمُرُّ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلَ عَدْوِ الْفَرَسِ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمُرُّ عَلَيْهِ مَاشِياً وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمُرُّ عَلَيْهِ حَبْواً وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمُرُّ عَلَيْهِ مُتَعَلِّقاً، فَتَأْخُذُ النَّارُ مِنْهُ شَيْئاً وَتَتْرُكُ شَيْئاً

> The straight path is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, but some cross it as fast as lightning, others run, many cross it walking, yet some crawl across, until finally, others cross it with their bodies hanging down into the Fire and it swallows them one after another.[134]

Therefore, the meaning of "the path" here means crossing over one's second nature of wicked acts and unpraiseworthy attributes. So whoever has been uninvolved with such things crosses over as fast as lightning; if he was to a certain degree involved, he crosses as fast as a horse rider; but if he has been seriously involved, then he crosses hanging down into the Fire, until at last the Fire consumes him.

The Imam who assigns the straight path for the people in this world has control over the souls on the Day of Resurrection as well, which is the Day when the primary attributes and nature of man appear, and he assigns each person's speed when crossing the Path. He permits everyone to walk on the Path according to his struggle to be closer to God in this world or his lack thereof. However, he will not let pass those who did not believe in the *wilāyah* while in this world and had ignored the nature of their humanity, and he will command Hell to swallow and take them.

As the Imam has full knowledge of the spiritual state of both the believers and the unbelievers in this world, there too he will stand on the height overlooking Paradise and Hell and observe the good condition of each one of the believers in Paradise, and the bad situation of the wicked in Hell.

In the Qur'an, that height on which he stands is mentioned as *al-A'rāf*:

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ

Between them is a veil. And on the Heights are men who know them all by their marks... (7:46)

A'rāf has two meanings: one is the upper part of a curtain or veil, and the other is the top of a hill or mountain, and in this verse both of them are correct. That is, a screen is hung between Paradise and Hell and at the top of the screen stands the Imam. Then, as he already knew the people and had full knowledge of them in this world—who was the believer and which one was the unbeliever—there he stands on the "height" and looks at them one by one in the face. When he catches sight of the believers he sends them to

Paradise, and when he sees an unbeliever he commands him to enter Hell.

Accordingly, the reality of Hell and the "height," and the secrets of the relation of the Imam with the "height" become quite clear.

Now it is time to discuss the numerous Shi'a narrations concerning Imam Ali. However, to make it clear that the Sunnis also understand them and have no doubts about them, we have decided to quote them from their own books.

Ibn Ḥajar Haythamī al-Shāfi'ī said that Ibn al-Sammān reported that Abū Bakr said to Ali:

سمعت رَسُولَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله يقول: لا يجوز أحدٌ الصراط إلا من كتب له عليٌّ الجواز.

I heard the Messenger say: 'No one can cross the Path unless Ali writes permission for him to cross.'[135]

And Ibn Ḥajar, quoting from the *Sunan al-Dār Quṭni'*, narrates that:

إنّ علياً عليه السلام قال للستة الذين جعل عمر الامر شوري بينهم كلاماً طويلاً من جملته: انشدكم الله هل فيكم احدٌ قال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله: يا علي انت قسيم الجنة والنار يوم القيامة غيري؟ قالوا اللهم لا، ومعناه ماروا عنتره عن الرضا عليه السلام انه عليه السلام قال له: أنت قسيم الجنة والنار في يوم القيامة تقول للنار هذا لي وهذا لك.

Ali in his fluent speech said to the six persons who had been in the council arranged by 'Umar: "I want you to answer me by God if there is any among you, other than me, to whom the Prophet may have said: 'O Ali, you are the divider of Paradise and Hell on the Day of Judgment?'" They said: "O, by God, never!"

Ibn Ḥajar, by emphasizing that Abū Bakr has narrated this story regarding the council, has given the words of Ali as a witness to what Imam Riḍā said to 'Antara concerning Imam Ali's speech.

Muḥib al-Ṭabarī al-Shāfi'ī has quoted this very narration from Ghays ibn Abī Hāzim, for he says that Ghays ibn Hāzim said:

عن قيس ابن ابي حازم قال: التقى ابو بكر وَعَلِيُّ بْنُ ابيطالب رضى الله عنهما، فَتَبَسَّمَ ابو بكر في وَجْهِ عَلِيٍّ فقال له مالك تبسمت؟ قال: سَمِعْتُ رَسولَ الله صلى الله عليه و آله يَقولُ: لا يَجوزُ احَدٌ الصِّراطَ الا مَنْ كَتَبَ لَهُ عَلِيٌّ الجواز.

Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib and Abū Bakr came face to face and Abū Bakr smilingly looked at Ali. Ali asked: 'Why do you smile?' He answered, 'I heard the Prophet say: "No one will cross the Path unless Ali permits him."'[136]

And Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī quotes this narration from Abū Bakr in his book *al-Manāqib*.[137]

Allāmah Mīrzā Najm al-Dīn Sharī 'Askarī narrates this story from Abū Bakr and many great people in his book called *Maqām al-Imam Amir al-Mu'minīn ind al-Khulafā* (*The Position of the Imam Ali, the Master of the Faithful, in the Caliphs' View*):

1) Ibrāhim ibn Muhammad Hamwini Shāfi'ī in *Farā'id al-Sibṭayn*, vol. 1, part 45;

2) Muḥib al-Ṭabarī al-Shāfi'ī in his *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍara fi Faḍā'il al-Itra*, vol. 2, pages 173,177 and 244 has written that Ḥākemi has narrated this in his *Arba'in*;

3) Ibn Abī 'Adsa has narrated in his book of history that Abū Bakr said to Ali:

سَمِعْتُ رَسولَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله يَقولُ: لا يَجوزُ اَحَدٌ الصِّراطَ اِلّا مَنْ كَتَبَ لَهُ عَلِيٌّ الْجَوازَ.

I heard the Prophet say: 'No one can cross the Path until Ali permits him.';

4) Shaykh Sulaymān Ḥanafi al-Qundūzī in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, pages 86 and 112;

5) Ibn Maghāzilī al-Shāfi'ī in his *al-Manāqib* and *Ghāyah al-Marāni*;

6) Khatib Baghdādi in *Tārikh al-Baghdād* (*A History of Baghdād*), vol. 3, page 161;

7) Qaḍi Ayāḍ in *al-Shifā*;

8) Allama Sayyid Abū Bakr ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Alavi al-Ḥusayni al-Shāfi'ī in *Rashfat al-Ṣādi min Buhūr Faḍā'il Bani al-Hādi*;

9) Qurayshi in *Shams al-Akhbār*;

10) Allama Shaykh 'Abdullah Shabrāwi al-Shāfi'i in *al-Itḥāf bi Ḥubb al-Ashrāf*;

11) And Is'āf al-Rāghibin said: "Apart from Abū Bakr, others like Ibn 'Abbās have also narrated this story."

Of course, among those mentioned above, Ḥamwīnī, Muḥib al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Adasa, and Sulaymān Qundūzī have narrated the story, while the rest have just put it in their books.[138]

However, in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah* (pp. 86, 112), this story has not been narrated by Abū Bakr, but on page 112 it is referred to Ali. It is also mentioned by 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd, Anas ibn Mālik, and Abī Sa'īd al-Khidri.

And they say that al-Ḥamwīnī narrates it through his chain from Mālik ibn Anas and Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq, and he from his great grandfather, Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, who said:

إذا جمع الله الأولين والآخرين يوم القيامة نصب الصراط على جهنم لم يجز عنها أحدٌ إلا من كانت معه براءةٌ بولاية علي بن أبي طالب

When God brings together the earlier ones and the last ones on the Day of Resurrection, He sets the Path over Hell, and no one can pass it except those who have believed the *wilāyah* of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Similarly, Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad has narrated this story through al-Hasan al-Baṣri from Ibn Mas'ūd.

Muwaffaq through his chain also narrated it from Mujāhid, from Ibn 'Abbās.

Also Ibn al-Maghāzi narrated this story through his chain from Mujāhid, Ibn 'Abbās, and Ṭāwūs from Ibn 'Abbās, and also through his chain from Anas ibn Mālik and his chain from ibn Sa'īd al-Khidri.

However, on pp. 86 and 113 he has quoted in another context that Ibn Mas'ūd said that the Prophet said:

إذا كان يوم القيامة يقعد علي بن أبي طالب ع على الفردوس وهو جبل قد علا على الجنة وفوقه عرش رب العالمين، ومن سفحه تتفجر أنهار الجنة وتتفرق في الجنان وهو جالس على كرسي من نور تجري بين يديه التسنيم لا يجوز أحد الصراط إلا ومعه سند بولاية علي وولاية أهل بيته فيدخل محبيه الجنة ومبغضيه النار.

> When the Day of Resurrection approaches, Ali sits on the highest mountain, which overlooks all of Paradise; God's Firmament is above him and pure streams flow around the mountain. Ali sits on a couch made of light and the River Tasnim passes in front of him; no one crosses the Path except him who believed in the Guardianship of Ali. Ali takes his friends to Paradise and sends his enemies to Hell.

This kind of narration is found in Khārazmī's *Maqtal*.[139]

The position of Ali on the Heights denotes the highest point that the veil of Guardianship is permitted to extend in the territory of the

Divinity, where at the bottom of the Heights the River Tasnim is flowing to Paradise.

The River Tasnim is formed through the Guardianship, and its branches find their way into the hearts of the believers. They come into sight and lead to their places in Paradise. Then, Ali, who is the reality of the Guardianship, will share out each branch of the River to each soul according to its merits and struggle in life and let them pass over the Path to their permanent place in Paradise. Those who have not believed in the Guardianship will be sent to Hell.

Ibn Shahr Āshūb says:

> Ibn 'Abbās and Anas have quoted from the Prophet that he said:
>
> قال: إذا كان يوم القيامة ونصب الصراط على جهنم لم يجز عليه إلا من معه جواز بولاية علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام وذلك قوله تعالى وقفوهم إنهم مسؤلون
>
> When the Resurrection approaches and the Path is set above Hell, no one can cross it except one who believes in the *wilāyah* of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. This is as God has said: "Stop them as they are going to be questioned."[140]

Ibn Shahr Āshūb has also said, according to his authenticated documents, that his father, Shahr Āshūb, has narrated:

لكل شيء جواز، وجواز الصراط حب علي بن أبي طالب

There is a permission for everything, and the permission for crossing 'the Path' is having the love of Ali and believing in his Guardianship.

And in *Tārikh al-Khatib,* Laith is narrating from Mujāhid, from Ṭāwūs, from Ibn 'Abbās, who asked the Prophet:

قلت للنبي: يا رسول الله، للناس جواز؟ قال: نعم، قلت: وما هو؟ قال: حب علي بن أبي طالب

"O Messenger of God, will people be given permission to pass the Path?" And he answered: "Yes." Then he asked: "What is that permission?" and the Prophet said: "It is having love for Ali."

And in the narration of Waki', Abū Sa'īd says:

يا رسول الله ما معني براءة علي؟ قال: لا اله الا الله، محمد رسول الله، علي ولي الله

"O Messenger of God, what is the immunity through Ali?" and he said: "It is to witness the unity of God, the prophethood of the Prophet, and the Guardianship of Ali, the Friend of God."

The Prophet asked Gabriel:

كَيْفَ تَجُوزُ أُمَّتِي الصِّرَاطَ فَمَضَى وَعَادَ، وَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يُقْرِئُكَ السَّلَامَ وَيَقُولُ: إِنَّكَ تَجُوزُ الصِّرَاطَ بِنُورِي وَعَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ يَجُوزُ الصِّرَاطَ بِنُورِكَ، وَأُمَّتُكَ تَجُوزُ الصِّرَاطَ بِنُورِ عَلِيٍّ، فَنُورُ أُمَّتِكَ مِنْ نُورِ عَلِيٍّ، وَنُورُ عَلِيٍّ مِنْ نُورِكَ، وَنُورُكَ مِنْ نُورِ اللهِ

"How shall my nation cross the Path?" Gabriel went away and then returned saying: "God is sending peace upon you and stating: 'You yourself will pass it by My Light, and Ali will pass it through your light, your nation will pass it by the light of Ali. Therefore your nation's light is from Ali, and Ali's light is from you, and your Light is from God.'"

They have reported that:

وهو الصراط الذي يقف عن يمينه رسول الله ص وعن شماله أمير المؤمنين ع ويأتيهما النداء من الله تعالى أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ

It is a Path on the right on which the Prophet stands and on the left on which stands the Commander of the Believers. Then God says: 'Cast down into Hell every tyrant and the obstinate!'[141]

Hasan Baṣri has quoted 'Abdullāh who narrated that the Prophet said:

وَهُوَ جَالِسٌ عَلَى كُرْسِيٍّ مِنْ نُورٍ يَعْنِي عَلِيّاً يَجْرِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ التَّسْنِيمُ لَا يَجُوزُ أَحَدٌ الصِّرَاطَ إِلَّا وَلَهُ بَرَاءَةٌ بِوَلَايَتِهِ وَوَلَايَةِ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ يُشْرِفُ عَلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَيُدْخِلُ مُحِبِّيهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمُبْغِضِيهِ النَّارَ.

In the Hereafter Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib sits on a couch of Light and the River Tasnim flows in front of him. In the meantime, no one can cross the Path high above Hell except those who believe in him and his Household. Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib dominates all of Paradise, and he takes those who love him to Paradise and casts the hateful into Hell.[142]

And the poet of the Household, Sayyid Ismā'il ibn Muhammad Ḥimyari, has beautifully described this as:

قول على لحارث عجب كم ثم أعجوبة له حلا

يا حار همدان من يمت يرني من مؤمن أو منافق قبلا
يعرفني طرفة وأعرفه بعينه واسمه وما فعلا
وأنت عند الصراط تعرفني فلا تخف عثرة ولا زللا
أسقيك من بارد على ظمإ تحاله في الحلاوة العسلا
أقول للنار حين توقف للعرض على جسرها ذري الرجلا
ذريه فلا تقربيه إنّ له حبلاً بحبل الوحي متصلاً
هذا الناشيعةُ وشيعتنا أعطاني الله فيهم الأملا.

1. Ali's words to Ḥārith are very strange,
For his words include many odd and strange things.
2. When one dies, this Ḥarith comes to see
Whether he be a man of faith, or hypocrite.[143]
3. The dead one sees me through his very eyes,
But I see him by his character as he dies![144]
4. And you recognize me when crossing the Path,
So do not fear for your error and loss;
5. I will be at your service in that heat and thirst,
Bringing you calm, sweet, cool water to taste.
6. When you are stopped on the Path to be questioned
I will command the Fire: "O, he is my friend, be patient.
7. Let him alone, let him be on his own, and do not approach,
For he has a cord joined to the cord of God's revelation dear,
8. This man is of our own followers, and God has said:
"I shall bring their dreams to reality!"[145]

Ali's Words to Ḥārith Hamdāni

Ibn Shahr Āshūb says that Shaykh Ṭūsi in his *Amāli*, after giving the words of Ali to Ḥārith Hamdāni, has narrated that Ali also said to Ḥārith:

The Prophet said:

اذا كانَ يَوْمَ القيمةِ اخذتُ بِحُجْزَةٍ مِنْ ذِي العَرْشِ، وَاخَذْتَ انْتَ يا عَلِيّ بِحُجْزَتِي وَاخَذَتْ ذُرِّيّتُكَ بِحُجْزَتِكَ وَ اخَذَتْ شِيعَتُكُمْ بِحُجْزَتِكُمْ فَما يَصْنَعُ اللهُ بِنَبِيِّهِ؟ وَما ذا يَصْنَعُ نَبِيّهُ بِوَصِيِّهِ؟ الى انْ قالَ: خُذْها اليْكَ يا حارُ قَصيرةً مِنْ طَويلةٍ انْتَ مَعَ مَنْ احْبَبْتَ وَلَكَ ما اكْتَسَبْتَ.

When the Day of Judgment approaches, I shall beseech God, the Owner of the Firmament, and you, O Ali, will implore me, then your children and Household will implore you, and finally your followers will implore you all. O Ḥārith, listen well to whatever I

tell you, and keep it in your mind. O Ḥārith, this is but a minute drop of the vast ocean I have told you. You will be in the company of your Beloved, so you will have whatever you attained in this world![146]

Ḥārith Hamdāni and all his relatives, who were members of a tribe from Yemen, struggled hard on the Day of Ṣiffin to save Islam and protect their Imam. They faced so much hardship that Ali said of them:

ولوكنت بوابا على باب جنة لقلت لهمدان ادخلي بسلام.

If I were a gatekeeper in Paradise, I would let all the Hamdānis enter it with satisfaction—this I can do![147]

Also, Sayyid Ḥimyari says:

ولدى الصراط ترى عليّاً واقفاً يدعو إليه وليّه المنصورا
الله أعطى ذا علىّ كلّه وعطاء ربّي لم يكن محظوراً.

You will see Ali standing by the Path;
His Lord has made him victorious and just.
God has honored him immensely,
and honor by God can by no means be bad![148]

Lesson Ten:
The Necessity of the Living Imam for the Delight of Hearts

LESSON TEN

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ.

And We made them leaders who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the right establishment of worship and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone). (21:73).

The Principle of Cause and Effect

Every creature, indeed everything in creation, has an origin and cause based on its genesis, and changes in it are based on varied causes.

A pane of glass breaks if we throw a stone at it, a stream of flowing water wets its surroundings, and if we lead more water into the stream it speedily flows to farther distances.

This is a principle of creation and evolution that is common to all creatures in the world.

The Effect of Human Companionship

The character, nature, opinions, and morality of man also follow the principle of causality. Human experience has proven that the companionship of good people has a good effect, and companionship with the bad has a bad effect. How often a good-natured person has become insincere by befriending an evil person. On the other hand, a wicked person, by constant fraternization with the wise, has changed his opinions and corrected his behavior.

Thus, it has always been enjoined in Islam that a man should have good company and keep away from the bad, for even just sitting once with a bad person has some bad effect, whether they are discussing something or just sitting in silence, because souls need no words. Therefore, when two souls meet, they have a direct effect on one another.

If a man wants his character and human attributes to change and become good, he must acquaint his heart and morality with the good, so that if he is faced with the wicked it does not affect him. He must attune his entire mind to the attainment of knowledge in order to become aware.

As water from a huge dam runs through pipes with enough pressure to reach each house in a due amount, so the source of life and knowledge is there for us to duly surrender to and humbly follow. Two different things are needed for this: one is the origin of knowledge and life, and the other is humility on our part, so that the cause can carry out its function. The preparation for receiving knowledge is tantamount to having it.

The Heart of the Imam is the Center for the Effusion of Knowledge

The source of the effusion of knowledge is the heart of the Imam through which he governs the nature of all being and gives to each creature according to its talents. As it is stated:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا

And We made them leaders who guide by Our command... (21:73)

"Guiding by God's command" is the same as "guiding the people" by their soul and celestial aspect.

Thus, there must always be a living Imam in the world, according to the following verse:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوكُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

(Think of) the Day when We shall summon all mankind with their (respective) Imams [*leaders*]... (17:71)

By this we can understand that the Imam is present at all times, and that finally every individual is called together with him. This is the truest and the main principle that, among all the religions of the world, Islam relies on. Islam believes that the Imam is assigned to society by God, and that it is God Who establishes him free from error and sin, and with a pure heart, to oversee all the hearts of the people. Because of the teaching of this Islamic tenet, it has become an ideal and rule of life within Shi'ism. However, the Sunnis, who do not observe this tenet, cannot reach the main source of life and

knowledge. As already mentioned, they are unfortunate in missing one of the main implications of Islam.

It is for this reason that after the demise of the Prophet, an Imam was still needed, and this role was fulfilled by Imam Ali. A living and alert heart is needed for overseeing the entire world for people to attain their necessary needs and knowledge, for if this was required at the time of the Prophet and not now, and people say:

كفانا كتاب الله

The Book of God is enough for us. Then everyone would creep into a corner without trying to correct his soul.

The Imam inspires the knowledge of the Qur'an into the heart of a man, lacking which a man is blind, seeks the satisfaction of his passions, and interprets the Qur'an to suit his worldly desires. Whatever he does comes from his self's yearning and is insensitive to the consideration of the Imam:

لَا يَزِيدُ مِنَ اللهِ إِلَّا بُعْدًا

It does not approach God, but moves away.

The Shi'a Imamate as the Basis of Understanding Islam

The Shi'a say that Islamic education is based on the Imamate. At the time of the Prophet, Ali was the Imam, and his living heart was the source of knowledge:

فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى

And he revealed to His slave that which He revealed. (53:10)

He instructed the people. After Imam Ali, the process continued through the other Imams, one after another, and will do so until the reappearance of Iman Mahdī, through whom the heart, life, and knowledge of every person is saturated.

Another aspect is submission, and showing humility; and following the Imam prepares one's heart for the knowledge of the Imam, and this lies within the scope of the Shi'a. It does not matter whether the Imam is present or absent for his effect on the soul, for this is not a material consideration. Whether near or far makes no difference, for the effect on an active soul relates to its own merit.

This is because the celestial world is beyond space and time, and it is why one may find the effect of the active soul of the Imam in

every heart. If the Imam is in the East, but his follower is in the West, his heart can still benefit from him, just as a father's affection for his child is always in his memory. Whether or not the child is present, the expression of love for the child is in his heart. It is the same with the Imam, for if he manifests in the heart of a believer wherever he goes, the endless ocean of knowledge appears in his heart and life.

Therefore, because of his faith in the Imam, even though the Imam may be absent, the Shi'a believer benefits from his blessings and his endless source of knowledge, although there is obviously much more benefit in the presence of the Imam than in his absence.

The Kindness, Tenderness, and Softness of the Shi'a

After mentioning some attributes of Ali, Ibn Abī al-Hadīd says:

وَبَقِيَ هَذَا الْخُلُقُ مُتَوَارِثًا قَلَّا فِي مُحِبِّيهِ وَأَوْلِيَائِهِ إِلَى الْآنِ كَمَا بَقِيَ الْجَفَاءُ وَالْخُشُونَةُ وَالْوَعُورَةُ فِي الْجَانِبِ الْآخَرِ وَمَنْ لَهُ أَدْنَى مَعْرِفَةٍ بِأَخْلَاقِ النَّاسِ وَعَوَائِدِهِمْ يَعْرِفُ ذَلِكَ.

These attributes are said to have been with the lovers of Ali until now through inheritance. On the other hand, greed, hatred, and hard-heartedness are with the non-Shi'a. Even one of little understanding notices this fact.[149]

As the result of the connection of the hearts of the followers to that of the Imam, Divine knowledge of the Imam may flow into the hearts of his true followers. That the believers have streams of pure water in Paradise is due to this connection with a super source. On several occasions "the Paradise of the believers" is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, such as where it tells of the promise of the *gardens under which rivers flow.* (47:1)

Paradise Is the Manifestation of the Attributes and Actions

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ.

Verily Allah causes those who believe and do good works to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow... (22:14);
Indeed, Allah will cause those who believe and do righteous deeds to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow... (22:23);
Verily Allah will cause those who believe and do good works to enter gardens under which rivers flow... (47:1);
It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow... (66:8)

God lets the believers who have done good deeds enter Paradise with foliage protecting them against the heat of the sun, casting shade everywhere, and with many streams flowing within.

As mentioned earlier, Paradise is a place where men's secrets appear; and as the believer trusts in God, his soul is at rest and is released from the oppression and the temptations of the devil and evil thoughts, and now, in the presence of God, he is free from all disturbances.

He has joyfully trusted God, even when his soul was being wrenched away, and now he is quiet and tranquil. In the Hereafter too, when the inner existence of his soul and his good deeds appears, his attributes appear like the foliage of the Garden, with its branches casting shade everywhere. There is shelter from the burning sun, and no evil thoughts enter the mind.

Whether we imagine Paradise as the appearance of the believers' actions or as the reward for his actions, the result is the same.

Sound evidence for this is what God said to Adam before his descent into the world:

فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَّكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَىٰ ۝ إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ ۝ وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَىٰ.

So We said: O Adam! This is an enemy to you and to your wife, so let him not drive you both out of the Garden so that you come to toil. It is (vouchsafed) unto you that you will hunger not therein nor be naked, and you thirst not therein, nor are you exposed to the sun's heat. (20:117–119)

But in Paradise the heart of man is at peace, and no worry assails him:

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِندَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ.

Firmly established in the favor of a Mighty Sovereign. (54:55)

As well as returning to God, the people of good deeds will remain in everlasting Paradise, where they will recline in the shade of the trees.

The Running Rivers of Paradise

The running rivers of Paradise are the very knowledge and the merit that enliven the hearts. As the believers have irrigated their hearts with knowledge and merit, have confessed the Unity of God, have believed in His Attributes and Holy Names, and have confessed the truth of the Imams and the Messenger, then in Paradise these things emerge as the lives of the hearts, and will appear to them as these rivers.

All believers today who do good deeds and declare the truth of the Hidden Imam will benefit by these rivers. The amount of good deeds is compared with the bad on the written permission that the Imam hands over. Whatever action the Imam has permitted is right, and whatever he has forbidden is disapproved. As the knowledge of the Imam is true, the violation of his word and command is considered a deviation from all his teachings.

Those people who have not submitted their hearts to their Imam and have not benefited from that source of favor will have hearts that are withered and become stale; they have become disloyal and without merit, as a torn water-skin, and lost the ability to reason. They have forgone the nourishment of their capabilities, and they sigh with regret as molten metal scourges their insides.

As God has said:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ

A similitude of the Garden that those who keep their duty (to Allah) are promised: therein are rivers of water incorruptible, and rivers of milk whose flavor does not change, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of clear honey; therein for them is every kind of fruit, and Grace from their Lord. Are those (who enjoy all this) like those who are immortal in the Fire and are given boiling water to drink so that it tears their bowels? (47:15)

The Four Rivers of Paradise

In the previous verse, God speaks of the four rivers of Paradise, the first of which are rivers of pure, fresh water that is uncorrupted. This is somewhat similar to the water most desirable in life.

As He says:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

...and We made every living thing of water... (21:30)

The Rivers of Water

The life of the heart subsists on the knowledge and inner understanding of God, and the rivers of knowledge and inner understanding that run through the heart will appear in Paradise as the purest of rivers. The reason for mentioning the rivers is that all rightful knowledge and understanding in the life of the heart relate to them, and the longings of mankind are quenched by them. The reason they are pure is that they are unchangeable and uncorrupted, for if they were otherwise, all ideas would be based on wrong assumptions.

This kind of river is specified for the people who have purified their hearts and have led their lives for the sake of God; they have rightfully achieved Divine knowledge without changing their souls.

The Rivers of Milk

The rivers of milk have a taste that never changes. They are the appearance of knowledge and are useful for those beginning their journey towards God. Just as milk provides wholesome nourishment for a child, the knowledge that relates to ethics and behavior, or the wisdom of religious knowledge that purifies the soul, appears as these rivers and is there to give strength for the soul's journey. Through abstention from sin, those embarking upon the path to the heart are deserving of this, since they are just beginning and have a basic knowledge of religion, but need to go further.

That the rivers never change in their taste is a metaphor for the knowledge whereby virtues do not change through bad intentions, passions or ignorance.

The Rivers of Wine

The third group of rivers consists of the rivers of wine, which is pleasing for the drinkers thereof, although wine is forbidden in the world, as it stupefies the mind, making it senseless, and finally lowers man to the level of a beast.

However, the wine of the Hereafter has a Divine attraction, and comes about through the manifestation of God's attributes in the heart. It is a wine that strikes the mind dumb in such a way that man totally forgets his entire being. This is why this blessed state has been called "wine," for it leads man from the lower levels of the intellect to the higher level of witnessing in the heart.

Therefore, "the rivers full of wine" are the manifestation of the different Attributes and the Essence of God for those who drink from them, and are deserving of a complete witnessing. They have attained the merit to observe God's Attributes, which appear in glory and witness the beauty of His Essence. They are in love with the absolute beauty of their Lord, and have reached a level where they can drown in the Divine Light, which brings them delight and happiness.

The Rivers of Honey

The other rivers are those of pure honey whose sweetness is of the Divine World, which are given to those of a middle ranking on their way to God, along with the sparks of Light and other delights, which give them ecstasy and draw their attention to God so that they can see their way to perfection. Their good actions appear as the pure rivers of honey. This is for those people who had been searching for such delights, but had not yet reached a state in which they could see them.

Hence, the rivers of the milk are for those who are weak or are embarking upon the path to God; the rivers of honey are for those who are part-way and occupied with witnessing the Divine Attributes; and the rivers of wine are for those who are annihilated in the Light of God because of the manifestation of Beauty and their love of the Everlasting.

And the meaning of the following verse:

وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا.

...Their Lord will slake their thirst with a pure drink (76:21)

This refers to the very wine that has released them from all worldly attachments, such as property, fame, and wife and children, and has instead caused them to flee debased desires.

The pure, unchangeable water is for those who have entered their hearts, where passion has vanished and knowledge and virtue have arisen.

There are some of the middle-ranking for whom God's Attributes have been manifested. In order to always keep their love and the Divine attraction alive, some ginger, which is warm in nature, is put in their bowl of wine, as stated in:

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنجَبِيلًا عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّىٰ سَلْسَبِيلًا.

There are they watered with a cup whereof the mixture is of ginger, the water of a spring therein, named Salsabil. (76:17–18)

This ginger is from a river called Salsabil (a fountain in Paradise), which lures and excites them to drink because of its sweetness.

Of course, those whose love has not yet reached the higher degree will not be given just ginger, but it will be mixed with the water from the rivers. However, since their desire is still active, and they still crave knowledge of the Attributes, and sometimes they notice the serene appearance of Beauty, their bowls are mixed with cool, scented camphor:

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِن كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا.

Lo! The righteous shall drink of a cup whereof the mixture is of kāfūr *(camphor), a spring wherefrom the slaves of Allah drink, making it gush forth abundantly.* (76:5–6)

As they have not reached the station of Unity in which all being is drowned, they have not yet attained absolute peace and tranquility. Such serenity is for those who have reached the state of absolute servitude and have become obedient worshippers of God who are "stationed near." Thus they drink from the spring of camphor, and those who are prepared will fill everyone's cup according to their talents from this spring.

The fountain of camphor is the very River of Tasnim which is given to those who are "brought near," yet some is poured into the cups of the pious.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنظُرُونَ، تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ يُسْقَوْنَ مِن رَّحِيقٍ مَّخْتُومٍ
خِتَامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ وَمِزَاجُهُ مِن تَسْنِيمٍ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ.

Lo! The righteous verily are in delight, on couches gazing. You will know in their faces the radiance of delight; they are given to drink of a pure wine, sealed, whose seal is musk. For this let (all) those strive who strive for bliss. And mixed with water of Tasnim, a spring whereof those brought near to Allah drink. (83:22–29)

The pious drink of the wine whose seal is pure according to the rules of the holy religion; they have filled their cups with this wine and are out of the reach of Satan. They put some of the water of the Tasnim in the pure wine and give it to the pious to drink, while the

nearest ones drink directly from the spring of Tasnim which runs at the highest part of Paradise.

The River Tasnim Flowing within the Reach of Ali

It is Ali who stands on the Height above the River Tasnim, and all who are stationed near drink of the water flowing below him.

The River Tasnim springs from the heart of Holiness and quenches the thirst of those stationed near. It flows straight to the Kawthar (another river in Paradise), whence it flows into the hearts of the Shi'a wherever they are located. Everything of the knowledge that has been mentioned, whether it is Tasnim, camphor, ginger, wine, or the river of milk, belongs to the station of Guardianship, which is absolute knowledge, and they satisfy the children of Adam according to every one's merit.

The Cupbearer of the Kawthar

Many delightful narrations have been quoted by the Imams that say that the cupbearer of the Kawthar is Ali, and that he gives a full cup to every one of his followers. With a stick in his hand he sends the enemies of the Household away from the fountain. Some of these narrations are given below.

Muḥib al-Dīn Ahmad ibn 'Abdullāh Ṭabarī quotes Abū Sa'īd al-Khidri as saying:

قال: قال رسولُ اللهِ صلّى اللهُ عليهِ و آلِه وسلّم يا علي معك يوم القيامةِ عصاً مِن عصي الجنةِ تزود بها المناصِبين عنِ الحوضِ.

("ذخائر العقبى", has been extracted from Ṭabrāni, p. 91)

The Prophet said: 'O Ali, on the Day of Resurrection you will have a stick from the sticks of Paradise in your hand to disperse the enemies of the Household from the Kawthar.'[150]

The Prophet told Ali:

يا عليُّ، انّكَ غداً عَلَى الحَوضِ خَليفَتي، وَانتَ أوّلُ مَن يَرِدُ عَلَيَّ الحَوضَ وَانتَ تَزودُ المُناصِبينَ عَن حَوضي، وَانتَ اوّلُ داخلٍ فِي الجَنَّةِ مِن امّتي، وَان مُحِبّيكَ وَاتباعَكَ عَلى مَنابِرِ مِن نورٍ، رَوّاءُ مَرويّين، مُبيَضَةً وُجوهُهُم حَولي، إشفَعُ لَهُم فَيَكونونَ غَداً جيراني، وَانَّ اعدائكَ غَداً ظِماءٌ مُظمَئين، مُسوَدَّةً وُجوهُهُم، يُضرَبونَ بِالمَقامِعِ وَهِيَ سِياطٌ مِن نارٍ مُقمَحين.

O Ali, you will have a stick from the sticks of Paradise in your hand to disperse the hypocrites from the Kawthar.

Ghundūzi Ḥanafi says that Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad narrated it from al-Khārazmī al-Makki, from Sayyid al-Ḥuffāz Abī Mansūr Shahrdār ibn Shirūyeh Daylamī and from Zaid ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn from his grandfather Ali that the Prophet said:

> O Ali, surely in the next life you are my caliph by the Kawthar; you are the first to come to me there, and you will disperse the hypocrites from the river on that day. And you are the first among my people who will enter Paradise. Indeed, your friends and followers sit on couches of light, and all are quenched and in delight gather around me; I will intercede for them for they are to be my neighbors. And for sure, your enemies are thirsty on that Day. They will appear with dark, gloomy faces, and will be dispersed with fiery sticks and will be downcast.[151]

And he also says that Abū Na'im al-Hāfiz narrated from Abī Hurayrah that the Prophet said to Ali:

وَأَنْتَ يا علي عَلَى حَوْضِي تَزود المناقين وَاناَبَارِيقه عَدَدَ نُجُومِ السَّمَاءِ وَأَنْتَ وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ وَ حَمْزَةُ وَجَعْفَرُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ إِخْوَاناً عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ وَأَنْتَ مَعِي وَشِيعَتُكَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ص هَذِهِ الآيَةَ وَ نَزَعْنا ما فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ إِخْواناً عَلى سُرُرٍ مُتَقابِلِين.

> O Ali, you are by my fountain dispersing the hypocrites. The pitchers in Paradise with which they take water are as many as the stars. Then, you, Hasan, Ḥusayn, Hamzeh, and Ja'far are close together sitting on couches face to face. You and all your followers are with me.
> Then the Prophet, recited the verse *And We removed all animosity from their breasts and they are like brothers sitting face to face on couches in Paradise.*[152]

And in the *Jam' al Fawā'id,* Jābir and Abū Hurayrah quote the Prophet as saying:

جابر و ابو هريره رفعاه علي بن أبيطالب: صاحب حوضي يوم القيامة، للاوسط.

O Ali, son of Abī Ṭālib, you are the owner of my fountain on the Day of Resurrection.[153]

Also, Abū Sa'īd says that the Prophet said:

يا علي امعك يوم القيامة عصاً من عصي الجنة تزود بها المنافقين عن حوضي،

O Ali, you have a stick in your hand on the Day of Resurrection to disperse the hypocrites away from the fountain.[154]

And al-Ṭabrāni quotes Ibn Kathīr as saying:

كُنتُ جالِساً عِندَ الحَسَنِ بنِ عَلِيٍّ رضى اللهُ عَنهُما، جاء رَجُلٌ فَقالَ لَهُ: انَّ معاوِيةَ بنَ خديج يَسُبُّ اباكَ عِندَ ابنِ ابي سُفيانَ، فَقالَ لَهُ: انْ رَأيتَهُ مِن بَعدُ، ارنيه، فَرَّ آهُ يَوماً (فَاراهُ ذلِكَ الرَّجُلَ فَقالَ الحَسَنُ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنهُ لِابنَ خَديج: انتَ تَسُبُّ اباىَ عِندَ ابنِ آكِلَةِ الاكبادِ؟ أما لَئِن وَرَدتَ عَلَى الحَوضِ وَما اراكَ تَرِدُهُ، لَتَجِدَنَّ اباىَ مُشَمِّراً حاسِراً ذراعيه، يَزودُ المُنافِقينَ عَن حَوضِ رَسولِ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله و هذا قَولُ الصادِقِ المُصَدَّقِ عليهِ السَّلام.

I was in the presence of Imam Hasan when a man came in and said to him: "Mu'āwiyah ibn Khadij abused your father in front of Mu'āwiyah ibn Sufyān." Hasan said: "From now on, if you see him let me know him." One day Hasan saw the man, and the Imam said to him:

> Was it you that abused my father in front of the son of the "Liver Eater"? Know that when you approach the Kawthar, you will see my father rolling up his sleeves and dispersing the hypocrites away from the fountain of the Prophet; and know that these words were told by the Prophet.[155]

Ahmad ibn Muwaffaq writes in *al-Manāqib* that the Prophet said:

اعطِيَتْ فى عَلِيٍّ خَمْساً، هُنَّ احَبُّ الَيَّ مِنَ الدُّنيا وما فيها الى انْ قالَ وَامّا الثالِثَةُ فَهُوَ واقِفٌ عَلى حَوضى يَسقِى مَنْ عَرَفَهُ مِن امَّتى.

I have been told five things by God concerning Ali, the son of Ṭālib, and they are dearer to me than everything in the world.

He then mentions them one after another until he comes to this: But the third one is that Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib will stand by my fountain, and he will give water to any of my nation he knows.[156]

And also it is said that Sa'īd ibn Jābir quotes Ibn 'Abbās in *al-Manāqib* as saying:

يَا عَلِيُّ، أَنْتَ صَاحِبُ حَوْضِي، وَصَاحِبُ لِوَائِي، وَحَبِيبُ قَلْبِي، وَوَصِيِّي، وَوَارِثُ عِلْمِي وَأَنْتَ مُسْتَوْدَعُ مَوَارِيثِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِن قَبلِي، وَأَنْتَ أَمِينُ اللهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَأَنْتَ حُجَّةُ اللهِ عَلَى بَرِيَّتِهِ وَأَنْتَ رُكْنُ الْإِيمَانِ وَأَنْتَ مِصْبَاحُ الدُّجَى وَأَنْتَ مَنَارُ الْهُدَى وَأَنْتَ الْعَلَمُ الْمَرْفُوعُ لِأَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا مَنْ تَبِعَكَ نَجَا وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْكَ غَرِقَ وَأَنْتَ الطَّرِيقُ الْوَاضِحُ وَأَنْتَ الصِّرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ وَأَنْتَ قَائِدُ الْغُرِّ الْمُحَجَّلِينَ وَأَنْتَ يَعْسُوبُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْتَ مَوْلَى مَنْ أَنَا مَوْلَاهُ وَأَنَا مَوْلَى كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ لَا يُحِبُّكَ إِلَّا طَاهِرُ الْوِلَادَةِ وَلَا يُبْغِضُكَ إِلَّا خَبِيثُ الْوِلَادَةِ وَمَا عَرَجَنِي رَبِّي عَزَّوَجَلَّ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ قَطُّ وَكَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِلَّا قَالَ لِي يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَقْرِءْ عَلِيًّا مِنِّي السَّلَامَ وَعَرِّفْهُ أَنَّهُ إِمَامُ أَوْلِيَائِي وَنُورُ أَهْلِ طَاعَتِي فَهَنِيئًا لَكَ يَا عَلِيُّ هَذِهِ الْكَرَامَةُ

O Ali, you are the owner of my fountain, and you are the owner of my banner; and you are the beloved of mine, and you are my inheritor, and also the inheritor of the previous Prophets.

You are the Trust of God in the world and His proof for all beings, the foundation of the religion and the pillar of Islam, and you bring the illuminating Light to the darkness. You are the banner of guidance hoisted for the people of the world.

O Ali, whoever follows you reaches salvation, and he who rejects you perishes! You are the clear and the straight path! You are the leader of the bright-faced in Paradise and pious.

You are the Master and Guardian of those for whom I am the Master and Guardian, and I am the Master and Guardian of every pious man and woman.

They do not love you unless they are cleansed at birth, and none hates you but him whose birth-seed is unknown.

And God did not take me up to Heaven and speak to me without commanding: "O Muhammad, blessings are upon Ali—tell him that he is the Imam of My obedient worshippers and a light for them. May this honor descend upon you!"[157]

Ibn Shahr Āshūb has narrated five quotations from Abū Rāfi' that the Prophet said to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib:

وفي اخبار ابي رافع من خمسه طرق، قال النبي صلى الله عليه و آله

يَا عَلِيُّ تَرِدُ عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ وَشِيعَتُكَ رُوَاءً مَرْوِيِّينَ، وَيَرِدُ عَلَيْكَ عَدُوُّكَ ظَلْمَاءَ مُقْمَحِينَ

O Ali, you and your followers will drink from the Kawthar and be of good cheer, but your enemies will thirst and be downcast.[158]

And he comments that:

وسقاهم ربّهم شراباً طهوراً، يعني سيّدهم علي بن أبيطالب، والدّليل على أنّ الرّب بمعني السّيّد: قوله تعالي: واذكرني عند ربّك.

Their Lord will quench their thirst with the pure wine.

It is narrated that the meaning of "their Lord" here means "their Master," namely Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.

The reason that the word "Lord" is translated as "Master" is in accordance with what God commanded when Joseph said to his fellow prisoner: "Remember Me to your Lord," which here means Master.[159]

الفايق: إنّ النّبي قال لعلي: أنت الذّاد عن حوضي يوم القيامة تذود عنه الرّجال كما يذاد الاصيد البعير الصّادي أبي الّذي بيده الصّيد والصّيد، داء يلوي عنقه.

It is narrated in *al-Fā'iq* by Zamakhsharī that the Prophet said to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib: "It is you who, on the Day of Resurrection, are going to send the unbelievers away from my fountain; you will scatter the hypocrites, as the camel-drivers keep a mangy camel away from the others."[160]

Ḥimyari, the poet of the Household, has said:

وَأَزْمَعُوا غَدْراً بِمَوْلَاهُمُ تَبّاً لِمَا كَانَ بِهِ أَزْمَعُوا
لَاهُمْ عَلَيْهِ يَرِدُوا حَوْضَهُ غَداً وَلَا هُوَ فِيهِمْ يَشْفَعُ
حَوْضٌ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ صَنْعَا إِلَى أَيْلَةَ وَالعَرْضُ بِهِ أَوْسَعُ
يُنْصَبُ فِيهِ عَلَمٌ لِلْهُدَى وَالْحَوْضُ مِنْ مَاءٍ لَهُ مُتْرَعُ
يَفِيضُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ كَوْثَرٌ أَبْيَضُ كَالْفِضَّةِ أَوْ أَنْصَعُ
حَصَاهُ يَاقُوتٌ وَمَرْجَانَةٌ وَلُؤْلُؤٌ رَجْرَجُهُ إِصْبَعُ
أَخْضَرُ مَا دُونَ الْوَرَى نَاضِرٌ وَفَاقِعٌ أَصْفَرُ أَوْ أَنْصَعُ
وَالعِطْرُ وَالرَّيْحَانُ أَنْوَاعُهُ تَسْطَعُ إِنْ هَبَّتْ بِهِ زَعْزَعُ
رِيحٌ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ مَأْمُورَةٌ ذَاهِبَةٌ لَيْسَ لَهَا مَرْجِعُ
إِذَا مَرَتْهُ فَاحَ مِنْ رِيحِهِ أَزْكَى مِنَ المِسْكِ إِذَا يَسْطَعُ
فِيهِ أَبَارِيقُ وَقَدْ حَانَهُ يَذُبُّ عَنْهَا الرَّجُلُ الْأَصْلَعُ

يذبّ عند ابن أبي طالب ذبّك حربى إبل تشرع
إذا دنوا منه لكي يشربوا قيل لهم تبا لكم فارجعوا
دونكموا فالتمسوا منهلا يرويكم أو مطعما يشبع
هذا لمن والى بني أحمد ولم يكن غيرهم يتبع
فالفوز للشارب من حوضه والويل والذل لمن يمنع.

The meaning is as follows:

1. The rebellious cunningly insisted on their having sworn allegiance to their Master, Ali, so let him be perish who tricked in this way.

2–3. On the Day of Resurrection, they cannot enter the territory of the Kawthar, nor will His Reverence intercede for them.

4. There is a fountain for him, whose length is from Ṣan'ā to the Land of Shām—perhaps even longer.

5. They put a sign or a flag there for the guidance of the followers of His Holiness, and the fountain is filled with water blessed by him.

The Kawthar, too, runs with his blessing, its water as bright as silver, or even brighter.

6. The sand in the bed of the fountain is of rubies, pearls, and white rubies, which have never been touched; the ground of the Kawthar is of musk, and about it are tall fruit-bearing trees.

7. The leaves of the trees are very shiny and green, looking golden and charming such as no eyes have ever seen; when the mild breeze of Paradise blows, different sweet aromas rise from the fountain.

8. The constant breeze blows by the command of God, never stopping for a moment.

9. Wherever the breeze takes it, a delicate fragrance spreads about.

10–12. There are cups, bowls, and pitchers around the fountain, places there for the followers, and Ali, our Master, the Commander of the Believers, disperses his enemies away from the fountain, like mangy camels are drawn away from the sound ones.

13. When enemies want to come closer to the fountain to drink of its water, a voice is heard saying: "Away with you, the perishable!"

14. Return! You must seek the water that appeals to you, to quench your thirst, and find food to satisfy you.
15. This fountain is specified for the followers of the Household of the Prophet—those who have believed them and followed them in the world.
16. Thus, this victory and blessing is for him who tastes from that water, and abject is the one who does not drink of it.[161]

This fountain is the main source of Ali's knowledge and gives delight and new life and cures all ills. If a blind man enters it, he regains his sight, darkness becomes light, and the sick find health, their bodies sound. This fountain flows down from *al-A'raf*, which is the soul of His Highness, and from the Tasnim, which is his knowledge.

No station is higher than his, other than God's Firmament, which is rightly the station of Prophethood.

Both the Sunnis and the Shi'a have narrated that the Prophet has stated:

انا مدينة العلم وعلي بابها

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.[162]

Lesson Eleven
The Meaning of the Revelation of Charity to the Imams in the Commentary of Blessed Verses, such as:
...and We appointed them Imams who guide by Our Command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds.

LESSON ELEVEN

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ.

And We made them leaders who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the right establishment of worship and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone). (21:73)

In the previous lesson we discussed the certainty of God's guidance, and we drew conclusions from the above verse of the Qur'an. We now turn to a part of this verse:

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ

...and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds...

We will then discuss it, with God's permission.

The Meaning of the Revelation of Goodness to the Imams

In the following phrase, God states:

بعجبني إحسانك وفعلك الخير

The essence of the charitable deeds they did was Our Revelation.

Now consider the meaning of the following: The good deed you did for me delighted me, and your virtues and the good deeds you did for me that delight me in the future. The infinitive does not give any increase to it, but decreases it:

بعجبني ان تحسن وان تفعل الخير،

يعجبني الاحسان لك والفعل لك

The good deeds you did delighted me or your virtues and your deeds delighted me.

This is a similar case to the law-giving verses in the Qur'an, and the purpose of using the verbs in the future is to add emphasis, as in:

...and that you fast is better for you... (2:184);

وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

Say (O Mohammad), Lo! I am commanded to worship Allah... (39:11);

أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ

...serve none, save Allah... (11:26);

أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ

And to establish worship... (6:72)

وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

The Meaning of Inspired Exposure

In the above verse God is not saying: "We inspired them to give in the good deeds," but "The deeds that they did were inspired by Us."

God inspired them to do good deeds and they carried them out. As can be seen, the deed itself is the inspiration.

Therefore, we should consider how a deed can be an "inspiration." To make this clear, we have to look at an example from the Qur'an:

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ. ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِن بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ.

And your Lord inspired the bee, saying: "Choose your habitation in the mountains, in the trees and in that which they thatch; then eat of all fruits and follow the ways of your Lord, made smooth (for you)." There comes forth from their bellies a drink diverse of hues, wherein is healing for mankind. Herein is indeed a portent for those who reflect. (16:68–69)

Is the inspiration to the bee similar to the inspiration to the heart of the Prophet? The bee constantly receives the inspiration to make its home like this, live in such and such a place, go to that assigned flower, sit on this bud, but avoid these other plants. Or is it otherwise? God may have created this fair and delicate insect in such a way that all its activities are done by the Will of God, and this innocent insect, with no desires, passions or self-importance, fulfils its duty according to what God has assigned for it, moving towards the destination it has been directed to. It flies from one flower to the next according to its nature. It sucks the sweet-smelling flowers, gets the delicious sap, and builds geometrical beehives here and there.

This kind of inspiration is a kind of genetic inspiration (*wahy al-takvini*), whereby God, in preparing creation, has adjusted all their tendencies and activities so that no external matter can divert them from the perfection of their path, on which they pass without being forced forward.

The Inspiration of Good Deeds in the Imams

The Qur'anic verse in effect says: "We inspired the doing of good deeds in the Imams"; that is, all the approved actions they show are from God by His Command, and their being is with God. Therefore, all their activities take place without any selfish thought or passion.

They do not seek fame, and do everything with care and modesty, and in carrying out any activity they do not fall into the vain chimera of doing something for convenience, for they are beyond such states. Their intentions are those of God, and their actions are done in purity and without a contaminated conscience. They do not seek any benefit or reward for themselves, because their reward is in doing the action itself: they expect no external payment for their good deeds.

This kind of act is God's own act, which, with the will of God, issues from their pure, shining hearts and illuminates those who submit. It can therefore be said that their actions are inspired by God.

As long as a man's eyes have not seen God's Beauty, and he has not gradually forgotten his own being, he supposes his activities to be existentially his own, and certainly he does everything for the sake of some result or reward. However, if he takes steps on the path of righteousness, the path of his Creator, then by witnessing the Power and the Beauty of God and entirely forgetting his own self, he no longer seeks something for his own personal reward. He always feels humble, as soft as wax in the hands of the Supreme Power. It is

because he has seen Absolute Beauty and Unlimited Knowledge that he perceives his own being as an illusion and does nothing of his own accord, for whatever he does comes straight from the Rightful Source.

A well-known *hadith* says:

لَا يَزَالُ الْعَبْدُ يَتَقَرَّبُ اِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتّٰى اُحِبَّهُ فَاِذَا اَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَلِسَانَهُ الَّذِي يَنْطِقُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا.

My servant draws not near to me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him. And My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks.[163]

That is, he does not feel his physical body as his own, but as a channel through which God functions.

It is stated in the following verse:

You slew them not, but Allah slew them. And you (Mohammad) threw not when you did throw, but Allah threw... (8:17)

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

Another verse says something similar:

...The Hand of Allah is above their hands... (48:10)

يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ

And we deduce from this verse:

...and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds... (21:73)

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ

that the Imam is one who has overcome all his passions and entered Unity, and is dissolved in the bliss of Being, the universal Light, and exalted Holiness, for God's Being is the essence of all beings. From then onwards, his speech and actions, his silence and movement, his sleeping and his waking, his fighting and his rest are for God.

If one reaches this station with God's permission, he has the merit to be the Imam; otherwise not.

For the Imam to teach his followers, guide them, and call them to him, he must be pure, infallible, and perfect; one who has not yet abandoned his passions should not become an Imam; he would lead all his followers to sensual desires. This would clearly not be what God has commanded, for it would be an invitation to passion. The activities of an Imam, with rightful speech and characteristics, show that he is a proof, because right action and speech are the proof.

Therefore, he should be followed without searching for faults in him, because finding fault with him means finding fault with the Truth. The one who finds faults should refer to his own conscience and seek the faults there, because through his ignorance he has not known the Imam and makes false accusations.

It is true that many people are good and honest and do what is right. However, they do not try to know their Imam, and the state of the Imam is the highest degree.

The Rising of Zayd Was Not by the Command of the Imam

In the section called *"al-Ḥujja"* (proof) of the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Shaykh al-Kulāyni narrates through his chain by way of Abān from Aḥwal:

> I entered the hideaway of Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn as he was being chased by the spies of the caliph, and he told me:
>
> "O Abā Ja'far, what would you think if a man amongst us were to rebel against the caliph? Would you then also rebel with him?"
>
> To his question, I replied: "If one who rebels against the caliph is like your father (Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn) or your brother (Imam Mohammad Bāqir), then I would rebel to help him."
>
> Aḥwal also says:
>
> Zayd told me: "I have decided to rebel and fight with these people—rise up with me also."[164]
>
> I answered: "May I be made your sacrifice, for I will not do so."
>
> Zayd said: "Do you think yourself better than us by refusing?"
>
> I answered:
>
> > No, I have no more than a soul, but the question is that if there exists an Imam and proof on the earth and this rebellion of yours is without his permission and command, then the people who rise up with you will perish, but those who do not are the victorious ones. However, if there is not an Imam and proof on the earth, then the people are alike in rank and reward whether they rise up with you or not. This is because their actions are from their own will, and they have not done it by God's Command.

Zayd told me:

O Abā Ja'far, I used to sit on the table cloth by my father and he would nourish me with big morsels of food. He let the hot food become cooler and then he fed me. He showed affection to me, so how could he be pleased with me but not save me from the Fire by introducing the Imam to me? Is it reasonable that he should introduce the Imam to you, but not to me?

I told Zayd:

May I be made your sacrifice, because of his concern for you, and for keeping you away from the Fire, yet he has not introduced the Imam to you! He was afraid that you might not accept him and enter the Fire. While he has informed me and has introduced the Imam to me, so if I remain obedient to him and fulfil his command, I will find salvation. But if you do not accept him, perhaps your father does not care?

Then I said to Zayd: "May I be made your sacrifice, which of you is foremost, you or the Prophets?"

Zayd answered: "Surely, the Prophets are foremost."

I said: Jacob told his son, Joseph:

يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا.

He said: O my dear son, tell not your brethren of your vision, lest they plot against you... (12:5)

So why did Jacob not inform Joseph's brothers about this dream? He kept it secret because he had great affection for his son Joseph, and he knew that by revealing his dream they would kill him. Similarly, your father was also very kind to you and withheld from introducing the Imam to you; he knew that if he had told you, you would not accept him, and then you would enter the Fire.

Zayd said: "By God, now that you speak of these matters, I will also tell you what your master (Imam Ja'far Sādiq) told me in Medina: 'You will be killed; they will hang you!' And there is a document with the Imam within which my assassination is written."

Aḥwal then said: When I set out for the Hajj pilgrimage, I told Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq of our discussion, and he said: "You carried out your duty and sealed off the road all about him; you did not cut brief your talk with him."[165]

Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn was of the greatest dignity; he was well-known for his piety, asceticism, nobility, generosity, and

worship of God. When he was martyred, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was very upset; he wept upon him and asked God's forgiveness for him. Nevertheless, the station of the Imam was more than Zayd could imagine.

Both the Motion and Rest of the Imam Are Correct

Zayd's patience came to an end with Mansour Dawāniqi's deviations and his crime of being so careless of the people's future. This was the reason why he could not tolerate it and rose up against him.

However, the Imam is one who never loses patience or becomes tired in the face of oppression; his heart is firm, and he does not resort to bloodshed unless it is for the sake of Islam and the Muslims. He is never affected by his emotions, nor is he influenced by the people about him. He has no thought of revenge or taking action to satisfy his own passion, but all his affairs are for the guidance of the people and leading them to the utmost perfection and salvation. Accordingly, the question of whether he should fight or be at peace is based on good intentions, and either option is for God. Therefore, both his motion and rest are God's, and he must be followed.

The position of the Imamate means being responsible for the epistle of God and guiding the people to Him. No one is qualified for this position unless he has Divine knowledge and is open-minded and tolerant. His soul has been illuminated and has been tested by God.

Imam Ali was a replica of the Prophet, who wholly accepted this, not superficially, but logically, by knowing his station, and his many talents and merits. This was what drew the Prophet's attention to him.

According to the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet was taken for Ali in the Verse of Cursing, and this is why Fakhr Rāzī acknowledges this in a footnote to the verse.

Qundūzī relates:

> The author of *al-Manāqib* quotes the Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq through his father, who quotes from his grandfather Ali ibn Ḥusayn, who had narrated that the Imam Mujtabā Hasan ibn Ali in his sermon had said:
>
> > When the pagans and the deniers among the people of Najrān did not accept the invitation of my grandfather and rejected him, God said to my grandfather:
> >
> > (O Messenger), say:

«قل: تعالَوا ندعُ ابناءنا وابنائكم ونساءنا ونسائكم وانفسنا وانفسكم ثم نبتهل فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين.

...Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) and (solemnly) invoke the curse of Allah upon those that lie. (3:61)

فاخرج جدّي صلى الله عليه وآله معه من الانفس ابي، ومن البنين انا واخي الحسين، ومن النساء فاطمة امي، فنحن اهله ولحمه ودمه ونفسه، ونحن منه وهو منا ثم قال.

Therefore my grandfather took my father, my sons, my brother Ḥusayn, and from the women, my mother Fāṭimah with him and left! So we are the family of the Prophet, we are his flesh, his blood, and his soul; we are from him and he from us.

It is narrated by Rayyān ibn Ṣalt in the *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* that Imam Riḍā said:

عنى الله من انفسنا نفس علي وممّا يدلّ على ذلك قول النبيّ صلى الله عليه وآله لتنتهينّ بنو وليعة أو لأبعثنّ اليهم رجلاً كنفسي يعني عليّ بن ابيطالب فهذه خصوصيّة لا تلحقهم فيه بشر وقد تقدم في الباب الخامس

The phrase "of Our Soul" in this blessed verse means Ali's soul, and the reason is that the Messenger of Allah said: "Banū Wali'a must stop his disobedience; otherwise I will send someone whose soul is of my soul to fight him." By saying "whose soul is of my soul" he meant Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.[166]

Such is the character of Ali, and none amongst the people have such a station.

In his *al-Musnad*, Ahmad Ḥanbal has narrated from 'Abdullāh Ḥanṭab that the Prophet said to some people who had come to visit him:

لتسلمنّ او لأبعثنّ إليكم رجلاً كنفسي ليضربنّ اعناقكم، وليسبينّ ذراريكم، وليأخذنّ اموالكم، فالتفت الى عليّ، واخذ بيده فقال: هو هذا مرّتين.

"You have to surrender; otherwise, I will send someone, whose soul is of my soul, to behead you, to capture your children and take away your properties." Then, he turned to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, and took his hand in his hand and twice said: "This is the very same man!"[167]

He adds: "This narration was narrated by Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī Makki."

Also in his *al-Musnad*, Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal says:

قال: لتنتهين يا بني وليعة، اوْ لأبعثنّ إليكم رجلاً كنفسي يمضي فيكم امري، يَنتُلُ المقاتلة، و يَسبي الذُرية، فالتفت الى عليٍّ، فأخذ بيده وقال هو هذا مرّتين.

The Prophet said: O Bani Wali'a, stop your disobedience and aggression, or I will send someone whose soul is of my soul to carry out my command against you, to fight with you and capture your children.[168] Then he turned to Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, took his hand in his hand and twice said: This is the very same man!

It is also narrated in the *Mishkāt* that Habish ibn Jenāda reported the Prophet as saying:

عليٌ مِنّي وأنا مِن عليّ ولا يؤدّي عنّي إلّا أنا او عليّ.

Ali is with me and I am with Ali, and no one can carry out my task except Ali and myself.[169]

He says that Termidhi has also narrated this story, and that Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal quoted it from Ḥabish ibn Janāda Salūli. Termizi adds: "This story is authentic and very strange."

Ibn Mājeh has also narrated it from Ibn Janāda. He says that in the *Mishkāt* it is narrated by Imran ibn Ḥasīn that the Prophet stated:

إنّ عليّاً مِنّي وأنا مِنه وهو وليّ كلّ مؤمنٍ بعدي

Indeed, Ali is from me and I am from Ali, and he is the Master of all the believers after me.[170]

And Ḥimyawi says in his book that it is narrated that Ali said:

قال: اهدِي إلي رسول الله صلّى الله عليهِ و آلِه قنو موزةٍ يقشر الموز بيدِه، و جعلها في فمي فقال قائلٌ: يا رسول الله: إنّك تحبّ عليّاً؟

قال: اوما علِمت أنّ عليّاً مِنّي وأنا مِن علي

Some people brought a bunch of bananas for the Prophet as a gift. He took them, then peeled one and put it in my mouth in small pieces. Someone asked: "O Messenger of God, do you like Ali?" and the Prophet answered: "Do you not know that Ali is from me and I am from Ali?"[171]

It is also said that Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal has narrated in his *Musnad* from Ḥabish ibn Janāda Salūli, who had said:

I heard the Prophet saying:

عليٌّ مِنّي وأنا مِنه ولا يؤدّي عنّي إلّا أنا او عليٌّ

Ali is from me and I am from him, and no one carries out my great duty except Ali and me.

In *al-Manāqib* it is also reported by 'Atiyah ibn Sa'd 'Uafi that Makhdūj ibn Zubayr Zuhali had said:

نزلت آية اصحاب الجنّة هم الفائزون

"The verse that states *the people of Paradise are the victorious ones* was revealed, and we asked:"

فقلنا يا رسول الله من اصحاب الجنّة؟!

"O Messenger of God, who are the people of Paradise?"

He answered:

قال: من اطاعني، ووالى علياً مِن بعدي واخذ رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وآله بكفّ عليٍّ فقال: إنّ عَلِيّاً مِنّي وَأَنا مِنهُ فَمَن حَادَّهُ فَقَد حَادَّنِي وَمَن حَادَّنِي فَقَد أَسخَطَ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا عَلِيُّ حَربُكَ حَربِي وَسِلمُكَ سِلمِي، وَأَنتَ العَلَمُ بَينِي وَبَينَ أُمَّتِي

قال عطيّة: سألت زيد بن أرقم عن حديث مخدوج قال: اشهد الله لقد حدّثنا به رسول الله

"Whoever obeys me and Ali, my Guardian after me." Then the Prophet took Ali's hand in his and said: "Indeed, Ali is from me, and I am from him; so whoever quarrels with him, verily he quarrels with me, and he who quarrels with me angers God, the Honorable and Exalted."

Then he said: "O Ali, to fight you is to fight me, and peace with you is peace with me. You are the banner of guidance—a sign of the guidance of my nation and me."[172]

The Virtues of Imam Ali

'Aṭiyya, who had heard this story from Makhdūj ibn Zubayr, says:

> I asked Zayd ibn Arqam, who was one of the followers of the Prophet, about this narration, and Zayd said: "By God, I heard this story from the Prophet himself."

And Qundūzī says in *al-Manāqib*:

> I heard Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh say that he had heard the Prophet say:

إِنَّ فِي عَلِيٍّ خِصَالًا لَوْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةٌ مِنْهَا فِي رَجُلٍ لَكَفَى بِهَا فَضْلًا وَشَرَفًا

قَوْلُهُ: مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَعَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ

وَقَوْلُهُ: عَلِيٌّ مِنِّي كَهَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى

وَقَوْلُهُ: عَلِيٌّ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْهُ

وَقَوْلُهُ: عَلِيٌّ مِنِّي كَنَفْسِي، طَاعَتُهُ طَاعَتِي وَمَعْصِيَتُهُ مَعْصِيَتِي

وَقَوْلُهُ: حَرْبُ عَلِيٍّ حَرْبُ اللهِ وَسِلْمُ عَلِيٍّ سِلْمُ اللهِ

وَقَوْلُهُ: وَلِيُّ عَلِيٍّ وَلِيُّ اللهِ وَعَدُوُّ عَلِيٍّ عَدُوُّ اللهِ

وَقَوْلُهُ: عَلِيٌّ حُجَّةُ اللهِ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ

قَوْلُهُ: حُبُّ عَلِيٍّ إِيمَانٌ وَبُغْضُهُ كُفْرٌ

قَوْلُهُ: حِزْبُ عَلِيٍّ حِزْبُ اللهِ وَحِزْبُ أَعْدَائِهِ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ

وَقَوْلُهُ: عَلِيٌّ مَعَ الْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ مَعَهُ لَا يَفْتَرِقَانِ

وَقَوْلُهُ: عَلِيٌّ قَسِيمُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ

وَقَوْلُهُ: مَنْ فَارَقَ عَلِيًّا فَقَدْ فَارَقَنِي وَمَنْ فَارَقَنِي فَقَدْ فَارَقَ اللهَ

وَقَوْلُهُ: شِيعَةُ عَلِيٍّ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

1. Ali has great virtues, just one of which is enough to prove his nobility and superiority;
2. Of whomever I am a master, so is Ali his master;
3. Ali is to me as Aaron to Moses;
4. Ali is from me, and I am from Ali;
5. Ali to me is as my soul, his obedience is my obedience, and offending him is like offending me;
6. To fight with Ali is to fight with God, and peace with Ali is peace with God;

7. To be a friend of Ali is to be a friend of God, and to be his enemy is to be God's enemy;
8. Ali is God's proof for His obedient worshippers;
9. Affection for Ali is belief, and enmity towards him is disbelief;
10. The party of Ali is the party of God, and the party of his enemy is the party of Satan;
11. Ali is with the Right and the Right is with him—they will not separate;
12. Ali is the divider between Paradise and Hell;
13. Whoever stays away from Ali stays away from me, and he who keeps away from me keeps away from God;
14. And the followers of Ali are victorious on the Day of Judgment.

It can be clearly understood from these narrations that the Prophet, either inwardly or clearly, was akin to Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in all aspects of life. In his house, his harem—which is the harem of God—he let him abide; they were two souls drawn from one single soul, especially when he says: "No one carries out my tasks with such devotion as Ali." This means that no one can tolerate the burdensome task of the Divine mission other than Ali and the Prophet.

As a result, Ali was the close friend and partner of the Prophet in all aspects of life; his station was that of bearer of the Banner of Praise. According to many narrations, the Banner of Praise was always in his hand, and this means that no one after the Prophet has known God as well as Ali has, and therefore no one has prayed to God as earnestly as he has prayed.

Thus, on the Day of Resurrection, the position of intercession is in his and his Household's hands.

So far, we have explained some of the ranks of Ali. For example: he is the divider of Paradise and Hell, he gives permission to cross the Path, he is the cupbearer of the Kawthar, he has the authority to intercede, and he is the measurer of deeds.

We should know that the investment of Ali with these attributes is not inconsistent with the Power of God, but they are God's own Attributes; honoring Ali with these attributes does not remove them from God. They are the manifestation of God's attributes in Ali, but the essence of Guardianship remains with the Most High.

Whatever exists is from God, and His Holy Being is needed for the station of Guardianship. As things in this world are limited, power and knowledge have been divided among them, and each benefits from them according to its station and merit. This division is not inconsistent with the Power of God, for the primary Divider is

God Himself, and the manifestation of the divisions is from God. Similarly, in the celestial world, the Divider is logically God, for the division of the Names and Attributes are not hidden from Him. Therefore, the state of Guardianship is the very act of God.

As He has stated:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

Yet you will not, unless Allah wills... (76:30)

Hence, at the Resurrection when it is time for everything to appear, one sees nothing but the Power, Magnificence, and Beauty of God, and all beings are as nothing before the Essence of Holiness.

As it is stated:

يَوْمَ هُم بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ

The Day when they come forth, nothing of them being hidden from Allah... (40:16);

وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

...and they will come forth unto Allah, the One, the Almighty (14:48);

وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا

...Oh, that those that do evil had but known, (on the day) when they behold the doom, that power belongs wholly to Allah... (2:165);

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ

Lo! Allah! He it is that gives sustenance, the Lord of unbreakable Might (51:58);

وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

Then praise be to Allah... (45:36);

وَاللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

Allah! There is no god save Him, the Alive, the Eternal... (2:255);

وأنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ البَصِيرُ

...Lo! He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer. (17:1);

وإنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ العَلِيمُ.

...Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower. (44:6)

The station of Guardianship is the spirit of these Attributes and nothing more. Therefore, the manifestation of these Attributes and Names are Guardianship itself. All praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds, and may His Blessings be upon Mohammad and his infallible Household.

Lesson Twelve:
Infallibility is Necessary for Guidance to the Truth

LESSON TWELVE

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

...Is He Who guides to the Truth more deserving that He should be followed, or he who finds not the way unless he (himself) be guided? What ails you? How do you judge? (10:35)

The questions posed in this verse are logically based on the fact that it is necessary to constantly follow the right path. Therefore, following the infallible Imam would be the best example, and is the argument presented in the following.

The Necessity of Following the Truth

One of the commands is towards inner wisdom, for it is the necessity of following the Truth. It is a general rule that one always relies on. If a man deviates from it with his words or actions and has a tendency towards error, then he thinks his actions are right because of his passion or wrong assumptions, and because of his error he follows what is false, and makes escapism an excuse.

Therefore, the Truth is to be followed unconditionally, and this indicates another aspect, which is that it is necessary to obey whoever directs the people to Truth. This is because he knows what is right and is directing people to what is right. He has priority over one who does not guide correctly or directs people to the wrong path. As the obedience of a guide to the Truth is the right thing to do, he has great merit.

It was mentioned above that following the essence of the Truth is the necessary command towards innate wisdom. Based on this fact, the Holy Qur'an questions the unbelievers by first asking them:

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَآئِكُم مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ

Say: Is there of your partners (whom you ascribe to Allah) one that leads to the Truth? (10:35)

It is obvious that the unbelievers have no answer to this, because the partners they set up against God take different forms, such as stone idols, certain angels, different lords, *jinn* and devils, Pharaohs, and tyrannical powers. It is clear that as they have no power in themselves, they cannot do anything for the people.

As they have no answer, God tells His Messenger how to prepare to address their questions in the right way, and directs him: "Say: 'God guides to the Truth, for He sees its need and guides each being according to its capacity.'"

Then He commands His Messenger to say:

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

...Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its nature, then guided it aright (20:50);

and:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

Who created, giving order and proportion... (87:2–3)

Therefore, it is God Who leads man to a blissful life, and by sending His messengers and the Divine Books He invites man to the Divine Command.

The Necessity of Following the Infallible Imams Is Based on Following the Truth

When disputing with the unbelievers, the Prophet took two confessions from them: that their associates do not guide them to the Truth, and that that only God guides to the straight path. Then he spoke the following verse:

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَى؟

...Is He Who guides to the Truth more deserving that He should be followed, or he who finds not the way unless he (himself) be guided? (10:35)

It is obvious that their answer would be to say that God, Who guides to the Truth, is worthier; but as the pagans and the unbelievers are not bound by such logic, and they worship useless idols instead of worshipping the true God, they fail to notice the merit of this wisdom, and that is why the Messenger states in reproach:

فَمَالَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

Then what is your opinion, how do you take things?

Here we should examine the two parts of the verse above:

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ

Is He Who guides to the Truth,

and then:

فَمَالَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

...or he who finds not the way unless he (himself) be guided?

in order to see how these phrases are juxtaposed.

It is clear that a questioner usually expresses the final part of his question in the negative, as, for example, when asking: "You saw him, didn't you?" or "He studied his lessons, didn't he?"

However, if a question is posed in this way: "Does Hasan study, or is he proud of himself?" then the answer should take the form: "One who is proud of himself never studies." Thus, there is the sense of "he does not study" in the clause "he is proud of himself."

Conversely, "he is proud of himself" does not mean "he is not proud of himself," because in the above interrogative sentence, instead of "he is not proud of himself," the clause "he does not study" is used. Therefore, we can sense either that "he is not proud of himself" means that he is not proud of himself and therefore studies, or that he is proud of himself and does not study.

In the verse above also, the two ends of the interrogative sentence are neither negative nor positive in order to be in the interrogative, because the sense of the sentence conveys the question: "Is someone guiding to the truth worthier to be worshipped than he who has not been guided?"

And also, a sentence such as "He who is not guided except through the guidance of the others" means that he cannot guide, as he himself is not yet guided.

He who guides to the Truth is worthier of being followed than he who has been guided through the guidance of someone else.

He who originally guided is worthier to be followed than he who does not guide to the Truth.

Therefore it can be understood from the verse that it is reasonable to follow someone who guides to the Truth, for such a guide is one who himself is originally guided, but not by someone else. And such a man can only be the infallible, Imam who has always praised God and has never committed a sin.

Such a man has been guided by God Himself. However, someone who has taken a partner to God and worshipped him and committed sins, though he may have repented and become God-fearing, is not deserving of being the Imam.

Of course, it needs to be mentioned that the words "more deserving" are used in the verse in the imperative, and denote a preference rather than a necessity. To be convincing in such an exchange one needs to confound the opposing party, rather than presenting sheer facts. This is because it should already be clear that it is not permitted to worship anything but the Truth, which is to say only God, and that this is a necessity of faith.

This is a way of reasoning that Shi'a scholars have used for qualifying the following of the Infallible Imams, and it has been narrated through successive narrations from the Prophet, who has said: "The Commander of the believers, Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, has not worshipped idols even once, and has not committed a single sin." There is no doubt that he was instructed by the Prophet himself, and was the first man to embrace Islam, and this at a time when he had not yet reached puberty.

It has been narrated through the chain of Shaykh Ṭūsi, in *al-Manāqib*, and through Ibn al-Maghāzilī from Ibn Mas'ūd, that the Prophet said,

God, Glory be to Him, said to Abraham:

في آيةِ، لا ينال عهدِي الظّالمين، عن قول اللهِ لإبراهيم من سجد لصنمٍ دوني لا أجعله إماماً. قال عليهِ السّلام وانتهتِ الدّعوة إلي وإلي اخي عليّ، لم يسجد أحدنا لصنمٍ قطّ

I never assign him who has worshipped idols as the Imam. This is how prophethood and the Imamate came to me and my brother Ali, since we had never worshipped idols.[173]

Ali Is with the Truth and the Truth Is with Ali

Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī quotes fifteen public and eleven singular narrations that mention "Ali is with the Truth, and the Truth is with Ali," and that the Messenger implored: "O God, wherever Ali may settle, keep the Truth by his side and may he pray in my way."[174]

There follow some narrations that have been passed down by both the Sunnis and the Shi'a.

1. Ibrāhim ibn Muhammad Ḥamwīnī, a Sunni scholar;
2. Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī through his chain quoting from Shahr ibn Ḥūshab; and
3. Zamakhsharī narrating from the *Rabi al-Abrār*.

These three say that Shahr ibn Ḥūshab said:

I was sitting by Umm Salamah when a man asked permission to enter.

Umm Salamah asked: "Who are you?"

قَالَ: أَنَا أَبُو ثَابِتٍ مَوْلَى عَلِيٍّ عليه السلام،

قَالَتْ أُمّ سلمة: مَرْحَباً بِكَ يا أبا ثابتٍ ادْخُلْ، فَدَخَلَ فَرَحَّبَتْ بِهِ

ثُمّ قَالَتْ: يا أبا ثابتٍ أَيْنَ طَارَ قَلْبُكَ حِينَ طَارَتِ الْقُلُوبُ مَطَائِرَهَا؟

قَالَ: تبع عَلِيّاً عليه السلام

قَالَتْ: وُقِّتَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ بِيَدِهِ، إِنِّي لَسَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صلّى الله عليه و آله يَقُولُ عَلِيٌّ مَعَ الْحَقِّ وَالْقُرْآنِ، وَالْقُرْآنُ وَالْحَقُّ مَعَ عَلِيٍّ، وَلَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

He said: "I am Abū Thābit, the servant of the Commander, Ali."

Umm Salamah said: "You are welcome, O Abū Thābit, come and sit."

Abū Thābit entered and Umm Salamah greeted him.

Then Umm Salamah said: "O Abū Thābit, when the hearts flew to their different destinations, each heart had its own desire to follow a certain man; where did your heart fly?"

Abū Thābit said: "My heart flew to Ali."

Umm Salamah said: "Oh, you took your luggage to the best place! By God, in Whose Hand is my soul, I heard the Prophet saying: 'Ali is with the Truth and the Qur'an, and the Truth and the Qur'an are with Ali, and they will not separate until they join me by the Kawthar.'"

And then Umm Salamah said:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ إِبْنِي عُمَرَ، وابْنَ اخي عَبْدِاللهِ بنِ ابي امَيَّه، وَامَرْتُهُما انْ يُقاتِلا مَعَ عَلِيٍّ مَنْ قاتَلَه، وَلَوْلا انَّ رَسولَ اللهِ امَرَنا انْ نَقِرَّ فى حِجالِنا وفى بُيوتنا، لَخَرَجْتُ وَكُنْتُ حَتّى اِقِفَ فى صَفِّ عَلِي.

I myself sent my son 'Umar, and the son of my brother, 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Omayya, to help Ali in fighting with the enemy. If the Prophet had not commanded us women to remain at home and rest, I would also rise to protect Ali. I would come close to him and then fight with the enemy alongside the men.[175]

4. Ḥamwīnī in his book, relating through his father from Ali;

5. In *al-Jam' Bayn al-Ṣiḥāh al-Sitta* (*The Collective of the Six Sects*) by Imam al-Ḥaramayn, al-Juwaynī has narrated from the *Ṣaḥīḥ Būkhārī*, narrating from Ali;

6. In the first part of *al-Ferdaus*, narrating from Ali; and

7. Muwaffaq Ahmad Khārazmī through his chain quotes from Abul Hubāb Tamimi who narrates from Ali.

These relate that Ali said:
"The Prophet said: 'O God, may Your blessings be upon Ali, and may You accompany him with the Truth wherever he may be.'"

8. Ḥamwīnī has narrated through his chain from Di'bil Khuzā'i, and he from Harūn al-Rashid, and he from Azraq ibn Qays, and he from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet said:
"The Truth is with Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib wherever he may be."[176]

9. In *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥaba*, Aṣbagh al-Nabāta heard from Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr who heard Āyisha say:

I heard the Prophet say:

عَلِيٌّ مع الحقّ والحقّ مع علىّ، لن يفترقا حتّي يردا علىّ الحوض.

"Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali, and they will not separate until they come to me at the Kawthar."

10. Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī documents from Sulaymān A'mash, through Ibrāhim, and he through Alaghama and Aswad who said:

سمعنا ابا ايوب الانصارى. قال: سمعت النَّبيَّ صلى الله عليه و آله يَقولُ لِعَمّار بن ياسر: تَقْتُلُكَ الْفِئَةُ الْباغِيَةُ وَانْتَ مَعَ الْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ مَعَكَ يا عَمّار، اذا رَأَيْتَ عَلِيّاً سَلَكَ وادِياً، وَسَلَكَ النّاس وادِياً غَيْرَهُ، فَاسْلُكْ مَعَ عَلِي وَدَعِ النّاسَ، انَّهُ لَنْ يَدُلَّكَ عَلَى رِدىً، وَلَنْ يُخْرِجَكَ عَنِ الْهُدى يا عَمّارُ انَّهُ مَنْ تَقَلَّدَ سَيْفاً، اعانَ بِهِ

عَلِيّاً عَلى عَدُوِّهِ، قَلَّدَهُ اللهُ يَوْمَ القِيمَةِ وِشاحاً مِنْ دُرٍّ، وَمَنْ تَقَلَّدَ سَيْفاً اعانَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ عَلِيٍّ قَلَّدَهُ اللهُ يَوْمَ القِيمَةِ وِشاحاً مِنْ نارٍ قالَ: قُلْتُ: حَسْبُكَ.

I heard the Prophet say to Ammār ibn Yāsir:

O Ammār, some hostile people will kill you, but you are with the Truth, and so the Truth is with you. O Ammār, as you see, Ali has followed a straight path, while others go another, so you are to follow him and ignore the others. Ali does not mislead you and will never let you perish.

O Ammār, if a man carries a sword to defend Ali against his enemies, on the Day of Judgment, God will change that sword into a pearl necklace for him to wear around his neck, but if one should carry a sword to help Ali's enemies, on the Day of Judgment, God will change it into a fiery necklace for him to wear around his neck. And Ammār said: "You have said sufficient for me to understand."

11. Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī relates through his chain of documents from Alqamah and Aswad who said:

ايْنَا اباايُّوبِ الْاَنْصارى، وَقُلْنا لَهُ يا اباايوب انَّ اللهَ تبارَكَ وتعالى اَكْرَمَ نَبِيَّهُ صلى الله عليه و آله وَصَفالَكَ مِنَ فَضْلِهِ مِنَ اللهِ فَضْلَكَ بِها اخبِرنا بِمَخْرَجِكَ مَعَ عَلِيٍّ عليه السلام تُقاتِلُ اهْلَ لا اِلهَ الّا اللهُ؟

(قال ابو ايوب) اقْسِمُ لَكُما بِاللهِ، لَقَدْ كانَ رَسولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله فى هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذى انْتُما بِهِ مَعى، وَما فِى الْبَيْتِ غَيْرُ رَسولِ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله وَعَلِيٌّ جالِسٌ عَنْ يَمينِهِ وَانا جالِسٌ عَنْ يَسارِهِ، وَانَسٌ قائِمٌ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، اذْ حَرَّكَ الْبابَ، فَقالَ رسولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله افْتَحْ لِعَمّارٍ الطَّيِّبِ الْمُطَيَّبِ.

فَفَتَحَ النّاسُ الْبابَ وَدَخَلَ عَمّارٌ، فَسَلَّمَ عَلى رَسولِ اللهِ فَرَحَّبَ بِهِ، ثُمَّ قالَ لِعَمّارٍ: انَّهُ سَيَكونُ فى امَّتى بَعْدى هُناة، حَتّى يَخْتَلِفَ السَّيْفُ فيما بَيْنَهُمْ، وَحَتّى يَقْتُلَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً فَاذا رَاَيْتَ ذلِكَ فَعَلَيْكَ بِهذَا الْاَصْلَعِ عَنْ يَمينى يَعْنى عَلِيَّ بْنَ ابيطالِبٍ.

فَاِنْ سَلَكَ النّاسُ كُلُّهُمْ وادِياً وَسَلَكَ عَلِيٌّ وادِياً فَاسْلُكْ وادِيَ عَلِيٍّ عليه السلام وَخَلِّ عَنِ النّاسِ، يا عَمّارُ انَّ عَلِيّاً لا يَرُدُّكَ عَنْ هُدىً وَلا يَدُلُّكَ الَى رَدىً، يا عمّارُ طاعةُ عَلِيٍّ طاعَتى، وطاعَتى طاعَةُ اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

O Abā Ayyūb, God honored His Messenger, and because you accompanied him, He has given you nobility.

Now, tell us how you came to the assistance of Ali and fought with the (false) Muslims [the fight against the companions of Mu'āwiyah who pretended to be Muslims].

Abā Ayyub said:

> I swear by God that the Prophet was sitting in this room where you are now sitting, and there was no one other than Ali and myself with him. I was sitting on the left side of the Messenger and Ali on the right. Anas ibn Mālik, the servant, was standing in front of him. Suddenly, there was a knock on the front door and the Prophet told Anas to open the door for Ammār, a pure and blameless man. Anas opened the door, Ammār entered and saluted the Prophet, who welcomed him and then said:
>
> > O Ammār, soon after my demise, there will be sedition amongst my nation; they will draw their swords against one another, and some will kill others. When you witness this, it is your task to stand by this man sitting on my right, and even if you were to see all the people of the world on one side and Ali alone on the other, you are to remain with Ali. Leave all the people to do as they will. O Ammār, Ali does not lead you to lowness and confusion; he does not lead you from the straight path; O Ammār, obedience to Ali is obedience to me, and my obedience is to God.

12. Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī reports from Abī Laylā that the Prophet said:

قال رسول الله صلّي الله عليه و آله و سلّم: ستكون من بدي فتنةٌ فإذا كان ذالك فالزموا عليّ بن أبيطالب، فإنّه فاروق الاكبر الفاصل بين الحقّ والباطل.

Shortly after I have passed from this world, adversity will befall you, so do not abandon Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib at that time, for he is the divider of the right from the wrong and the arbitrator of God.[177]

13. Ḥamwīnī narrates from A'mash that Khudhayfa stated that the Prophet said:

عَلِيٌّ طَاعَتهُ طاعَتي و مَعصيَتُهُ معصيَتي.

To obey Ali is to obey me, and to disobey him is to disobey me.

14. In the book *Ferdaus*, Abū Sa'īd Khidri says the Prophet had said:

قال: قال رسول الله تَفْتَرِقُ امّتي فِرْقَتَيْنِ، فَيَمْرُقُ بَيْنَهما فِرْقَةٌ مارِقَةٌ، يَقْتُلُها أولَى الطائفَتَيْنِ بِالحَقّ.

My nation will separate into two, and one part will forsake their religion and the other will kill them.

15. 'Āmir Shu'bi (who had turned aside from Ali) narrates from Ibn Zubayr that Abū Bakr had said he had heard the Prophet say:

سمعت رسول الله يقول: الحقُّ مَعَ عَلِيٍّ وَعَلِيٌّ مَعَ الحَقِّ.

The Truth is with Ali, and Ali is with the Truth.

These are Sunni narrations mentioned in *Ghāyat al-Marām*. There are eleven narrations reported by the Shi'a of which we mention below only one.

'Atā's meeting with 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and their Discussion about the Caliphate of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib

Ibn Bābwayh narrates through his chain from 'Abdul Ḥamid A'raj, who said:

> 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās was sick and very frail, so we went to Tā'if to visit him. We arrived at his house, and after greeting him we sat.
>
> He asked: "O 'Atā, who are these people with you?"
>
> I said: "O my Master, they are respectable tribal Shaykhs of this town. There is 'Abdullāh ibn Salamah ibn Maryam al-Tā'fi, 'Ammāra' ibn al-Ajlah and Thābit ibn Mālikī," and I continued introducing them.
>
> Then after a few moments they all came closer, and said:
>
> > O son of the uncle of the Prophet, you have been honored to be in the presence of the Messenger and have heard much from him. So now tell us about the different opinions of this nation—why some of them prefer Ali to others, and why some believe that he comes after the three other caliphs?

قَالَ: فَتَنَفَّسَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، فَقَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صلّي الله عليه و آله يَقُولُ: عَلِيٌّ مَعَ الْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ مَعَ عَلِيٍّ، وَهُوَ الْإِمَامُ وَالْخَلِيفَةُ مِنْ بَعْدِي، فَمَنْ تَمَسَّكَ بِهِ فَازَ وَنَجَا، وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهُ ضَلَّ وَغَوَى، يَلِي تَكْفِينِي وَغُسْلِي، وَيَقْضِي دَيْنِي، وَأَبُو سِبْطَيَّ الْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَيْنِ، وَمِنْ صُلْبِ الْحُسَيْنِ تَخْرُجُ الْأَئِمَّةُ التِّسْعَةُ وَمِنْهَا مَهْدِيُّ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ

'Atā says that Ibn 'Abbās took a deep breath and said:

> I heard of the Prophet (s) say:

Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali, and he is the Imam and Guardian after me. He who resorts to him will succeed, but he who rejects him will be lost and perish. Ali will supervise my burial and fulfil my debt; he is the father of my two grandsons, Hasan and Ḥusayn, and there will be nine Imams from the lineage of Ḥusayn, amongst whom is the Mahdī of this nation.

Then 'Abdullāh ibn Salamah Ḥaḍrami said: "O cousin of the Prophet, why did you not let us know this before?" and Ibn 'Abbās said:

ونصحت لكم ولكن لا تحبون الناصحين.

But, by God, now I have told you what I had, and thereby did my duty—I have advised you, but I am sure that you do not like the adviser!

ثُمَّ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللهَ عِبَادَ اللهِ تَقِيَّةَ مَنِ اعْتَبَرَ تَمْهِيداً وَابْقَى فِي وَجَلٍ وَكَمَشَ فِي مَهَلٍ وَرَغِبَ فِي طَلَبٍ وَ رَهِبَ فِي هَرَبٍ فَاعْمَلُوا لِآخِرَتِكُمْ قَبْلَ حُلُولِ آجَالِكُمْ وَتَمَسَّكُوا بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى مِنْ عِتْرَةِ نَبِيِّكُمْ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ مَنْ تَمَسَّكَ بِعِتْرَتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي كَانَ مِنَ الْفَائِزِينَ.

Then he said:

O servants of God, be God-fearing; although he be pious, man is like one who stabilizes his position and seeks his own peace, but is always afraid (of the Hereafter). He is quick, but tardy in packing his bundle to leave; he has the desire for bliss; so before your death approachs, prepare for your last journey and come close to the Household of the Messenger and cling to them.

I have indeed heard the Prophet say: "He who, after my passing, turns to my Household will be prosperous."

Then Ibn 'Abbās cried deeply, and the people around him asked why he was crying, for he had the lofty position of being with the Prophet.

Ibn 'Abbās said: "O 'Atā, I am crying for two things: I am afraid of witnessing the appearance of the immense Majesty of God, and of being separated from His friends and beloved."

Then those around him stood up and left the place.

In the meantime he told me: "Hold my hand that I may rise, and take me to the yard." Sa'īd and I helped him to stand up, and we took him to the yard, and when he was in the courtyard, he raised his hands to Heaven and implored:

اللّٰهُمَّ اِنّی اَتَقَرَّبُ اِلَیْکَ بِمُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، اللّٰهُمَّ اِنّی اَتَقَرَّبُ اِلَیْکَ بِمُوالاةِ الشَّیْخِ عَلِیِّ بْنِ ابیطالِبٍ، فَما زالَ یُکَرِّرُها حَتّی وَقَعَ عَلَی الْاَرْضِ، فَصَبَرْنا عَلَیْهِ ساعَةً ثُمَّ اَقَمْناهُ فَاِذا هُوَ مَیِّتٌ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَیْهِ.

O God, through You I come closer to Mohammad and his Household. O God, through You I come closer to Shaykh Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. He constantly repeated these words until he collapsed on the ground. We waited for a while and left him a while. A few moments later, we tried to lift him to his feet, but alas, he had died and joined the endless Mercy of God.[178]

The Reason the Enemies Disagreed with the Caliphate of Ali

How, then, have some arrogated Ali's position as caliph and ascended the pulpit of the Prophet after witnessing so many clear statements of the Prophet—many of which have been narrated by the three caliphs, as well as 'Ā'ishah—acknowledging his station?

Their answer is what the Prophet has said, and what certain Sunnis have also narrated:

حُبُّكَ الشَّیْئَ یُعْمِی وَیُصِمُّ.

He who loves something, but his love is mixed with feeling and passion, then he is deaf and blind to what is happening—he sees and hears nothing but what he desires.[179]

It is no secret to people with logic, and crystal clear to the historians, that there was no excuse for the usurpation of the caliphate from the Household, but only the love of becoming Masters and ruling the Muslims. Therefore, all these clear narrations have been totally ignored. In the end they achieved their goal and immediately rose against the Household of the Prophet, setting fire to the front door of his beloved daughter. They made the rightful Guardian go to the mosque, where they forced him at sword-point to swear allegiance and accept them.

This is a dilemma that should be considered. Generally speaking, knowledge and real comprehension of the Truth are two separate things, the latter involving humility and obedience to the Truth. Most people are involved in the mire of nature and passion. It is not because of their ignorance, for they have enough knowledge, and they can tell right from wrong. However, in their activities they are captives of their endless desires and lack wisdom, and are drawn to unpleasant things.

Therefore, the Prophets and Imams invite the people to right guidance and teach them how to be humble before what is right, which is God, the Most High.

As it is stated:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا.

He is indeed successful who purifies it [the soul], and he indeed fails who corrupts it. (91:9–10)

In this verse, the "successful" one is he who has heard the narrations from the Prophet, but the one who "fails" is he who has not heard them. God says here that success is for the one who purifies himself, but he who fails is corrupted.

'Umar was quite aware of Ali's qualities and station. He himself has confessed that there are many narrations from the Sunnis about him. He also narrated many stories concerning this from the Prophet, but as already mentioned, whoso follows the Truth is inwardly pure and bound to his conscience.

Allāmah Amīnī says that Hāfiz Dār al-Quṭni and Ibn 'Asākir have extracted a *hadith* about two people who went to 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb and asked him about how to legitimately divorce a maidservant, and whether she may be married again. 'Umar stood up and they all went to the mosque and sat among the people who were already there.

'Umar asked the man closest to him: "Tell me, what are your opinions about divorcing a maidservant?"

The man raised his hand and with his middle and index fingers, made the sign of a "V." 'Umar understood that he meant two divorces, so he told the man: "Only two divorces are allowed."

One of the men said: "O Gracious! We have come to you, you the great and Ali! Why did you take us to the mosque and ask this man our question, and then believe him by his giving a sign?"

'Umar asked the two men: "Do you know who this man is?" They answered: "No, we do not know him." 'Umar said:

This is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.

اشْهِدُ عَلى رَسولِ الله صلى الله عليه و آله لَسَمِعْتُهُ وَهُوَ يقولُ: انَّ السَّماواتِ السَّبْعَ، وَالْاَرَضينَ السَّبْع، لَوْ وُضِعا فِي كَفَّةٍ، ثُمَّ وُضِعَ ايمانُ عَلِيّ فِي كَفَّةٍ لَرَجَّحَ ايمانُ عَلِيّ بْنِ ابيطالِب

I bear witness that I heard the Prophet say of him: If they put the seven heavens and the seven layers of the earth on a pan of a balance, and put the belief of Ali on the other pan, for sure, Ali's pan would prove to be the heavier.[180]

Allāmah Amīnī has said that Zamakhsharī has narrated in a story:

Those two men said to 'Umar: "You are the caliph of the Muslims, and we came to you to answer our question, but you referred it to him!" And one of them said: "O 'Umar, by God, I will never speak with you again." And 'Umar said: "Woe on you! Do you not know who that man is? He is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib."

Dār al-Quṭni and Ibn Asākar have also narrated the story from those who know the Qur'an by heart, and Ganjī in *Kifāya* (p. 129) states: "This narration is authentic and is accepted by the scholars."

And both Zamakhsharī's chain in *al-Manāqib* (p. 78) and Sayyid Ali Hamedāni Shāfi'ī in the *Mawaddah al-Qurbā* have narrated from the same *hadith* (that is, the last part of the *hadith* from the phrase:

لو ان السوات السبع

to the end).

The *hadith* of *al-Tarāzū wa al-Mizān* is also narrated from 'Umar by Muḥib al-Dīn Ṭabarī in the *Riyāḍ al-Naḍara* (vol. 1, p. 244), and in *al-Nazha al-Majālis* (vol. 2, p. 240) by Ṣafūri.

Lesson Thirteen:
The Meaning of the Imam's Guidance and the Conditions that One Guiding to Allah Should Possess

LESSON THIRTEEN

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Book:

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

...Is He Who guides to the Truth more deserving that He should be followed, or he who finds not the way unless he (himself) be guided? What ails you? How do you judge? (10:35)

In the previous section we discussed this verse in detail, and came to the conclusion that the guidance given by a guide must come spontaneously from the Truth, without reliance on anyone else. Whoever has a tendency to disbelief or sin has been led towards evil, and cannot therefore be an Imam or guide the people. There are also some other points to be considered.

First of all, "the Truth" in this verse means precisely what it says, rather than how it is commonly used. As can be seen, right guidance is related to one whose speech is right—either he believes it or not, or knows what he says or not—but what if he does not really believe what he says and has been guided elsewhere? This could not then be guidance to the Truth, but just what might commonly be called "guidance" in one way or another. Guidance to the Truth comes only from God and those who are themselves well-guided to Him, without interference or change.

Another meaning of "guiding to the Truth" in the verse is not only showing the way to God, but also the way to unite with Him. It is obvious that someone might introduce the way, whether he is an Imam or an ordinary person. Whoever simply guides may himself be guided or not, or perhaps may even be an unbeliever. He might be able to show the way, but could never ever join a man to God. Only the well-guided can do that.

A third sense of:

لَ أَيَهِدِّي إِلاَّ أَن يُهْدَى

he who finds not the way unless he (himself) be guided,

is either someone who has not been guided at all, or has been guided toward something else.

There is a difference between saying "Your striking me surprised me" and "I would be surprised if you struck me." In the first case the act of striking is fulfilled, while the second sentence means that I would be surprised by the act of striking. Shaykh 'Abdul Qāhir has a good explanation of this difference in *The Reasons for Surprise.*

Therefore, the phrase:

يَهِدِّي إِلاَّ أَن يُهْدَى

unless he (himself) be guided,

shows that he is not guided yet, but the implication is that he may be guided by someone in the future. Thus the guidance would be from someone else, and if he does not deserve it, he will not be guided.

Therefore, it can be seen that "does not guide" means either that he has not been guided and has guided himself, or he has been guided by someone else.

The Imam must be guided to the Truth, according to Three Conditions

Generally speaking, the Imam is one who has originally been guided to the Truth, and does not belong to any of the types categorized in the previous section. Therefore, he is immune from perdition and sin, that is, he makes no mistakes when receiving Divine inspiration, and whatever he receives is reflected in his heart without the temptation to alter or interpret it. He preserves it, and by that means guides the people to the straight path. In the meantime, he does not have any tendency towards error, as is clearly explained in the verse:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ

And We made them leaders [Imams] who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds... (21:73)

This is also clear from the next verse, when Abraham asks regarding the station of the Imamate for his offspring, for God states:

لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

My covenant includes not wrongdoers. (2:124)

This means that God's covenant does not reach those who have done wrong, even if that wrong is very small. In other words, God's covenant reaches only one who is absolutely pure and infallible.

The Imam is one who has not committed a single sin in his life, and whoever has committed the smallest sin in his life, has oppressed anyone, or has assigned partners with God, cannot be the Imam, even if he has repented and his sin has been wiped out.

Commenting on this verse, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i says:

> When some of our professors were asked about the relation of this verse with the infallibility of the Imams, they answered:
>
> > According to logical division, people are of four groups:
> >
> > There are those who are aggressive all through their lives; there are those who are pure, free from sin, and never aggressive; thirdly, there are those who have been oppressive in the early part of their lives but have repented at the end of their lives when God's guidance reaches them; and the fourth group are those who have been pure and infallible in the first part of their lives, but have become bad in the end.
> >
> > The station of Abraham (s) is above asking God for the Imamate to be given to any of these groups, for he makes no such proposal of asking for the station of the Imamate for someone who has committed, or may commit, any sin during his life, even at the end. Therefore, there remain two groups: one who has been pure and infallible throughout his life, or one who has been purified at the end of his life.
> >
> > God has stated that from these two groups, He will not honor His covenant to those who are oppressive; so it is clear that for those who have committed sins in the earlier part of their lives, even if God has forgiven them and His guidance has reached them, still the effect of sin is with them. Thus, the Imamate is not given to them. There remains then only one group, which is they who avoid sin throughout their lives. This is the real meaning of infallibility.[181]

So far the discussion has been based on verses of the Qur'an. There follow seven main points concerning the Imamate, regarding

which the Shi'a have strong beliefs, and whose authenticity they insist on, whereas Sunni opinions differ.

The First Point Is That the Imamate Cannot Be Elected

First of all, the Imamate cannot be elected: it has been created by God and passed through His Messenger or the prior Imam, or by clear miracles giving evidence of the Imam to the people. As mentioned earlier, God Himself has instated this position:

قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

I have appointed you a leader [Imam] for mankind. (2:124);

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا

And when they became steadfast and believed firmly in Our revelations, We appointed from among them leaders who guided by Our command. (32:24);

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ

And We made them leaders who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds. (21:73)

In all these verses the position of the Imam is clearly assigned.

The Imamate is a Divine Power put in the soul of the Imam, who by this means controls everything: the firmaments, the souls, and all being, as in:

يهدون بامرنا

...who guide by Our Command.

The one who has such power is the Imam, and he who lacks it is excluded.

Personal choice plays no part in this. If people are unaware of the celestial status of infallibility, they cannot know the Imam; therefore their choice would be false. But if we were to suppose that all people are aware of the essence of the celestial and the nature of things, God would give them the spiritual light to distinguish the status of infallibility. In any case, the Imamate is not something to be chosen. As already mentioned, the Imamate involves a holy power and sovereignty in the soul of the Imam, which surrounds the external. It is meaningless to say that a man might choose external things, since the external already exists, and does not come into existence through man's choice.

Would it be correct to say that it is we who choose the practice of jurisprudence of a learned man, or that we assign the power of a strong man? Or to say that it is we who have chosen the memory of one who has memorized the holy Qur'an? Absolutely not. The option is about the reliability of affairs. In regard to the option, it is that which comes into existence. It is destroyed with the lack of the option. However, concerning the fact that affairs that existed before the stage of choice—and still exist—no option is needed.

The Second Point Is That the Imam Must Be Infallible

The Imam must be completely infallible through the infallibility given to him by God. In this regard, we have drawn phrases from three verses mentioned earlier:

لا ينال عهدي الظالمين

My covenant includes not wrongdoers;

يهدون بامرنا

...who guide by Our command;

اوحينا اليهم فعل الخيرات

...We inspired in them the doing of good deeds.

It is clear that since the Imam has transcended all desire and is connected with holy Being, the will of God has consequently surrounded his being, and his actions are governed by the inspiration of God. The Imam is thus infallible and free from all desire—the real meaning of infallibility. According to the following verse:

فإنه يسلك من بين يديه ومن خلفه رصدا

...and then He makes a band of watching guards before him and behind him. (72:27)

This clearly explains that the Imams are infallible and guarded by God.

The Third Point Is That the Imam Is Confirmed by God

The Imam must be completely confirmed by God and his knowledge and understanding inspired by Him, so that it is God Who is responsible for his life and affairs. This can be easily understood from these verses:

أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ

...and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds (21:73);

لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

...when they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our signs (32:24);

يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا

...who guided by Our command. (21:73)

It is necessary for the Imam to be in a state of certainty, and this certainty can only be achieved by discovering the Truth and the reality of the Holy Kingdom through which he receives Divine guidance.

The Fourth Point Is That the World Never Lacks the Proof

The world and all the beings therein have an Imam at all times, and never lack God's Proof. This is made clear by the verse:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

(Think of) the Day when We shall summon all mankind with their (respective) Imams [leaders]... (17:71)

Since God calls every person on the Day of Resurrection with his own Imam, there is no one in the world without an Imam to guide him. It has been narrated time and again that even if there were only two persons in the world, then one of them would certainly be an Imam.

The Fifth Point Is the Imam's Knowledge and Command of the Nation

The Imam oversees the activity and speech of all God's creatures, and nothing is hidden from him. All the foregoing verses indicate this. As this is the case, all things—beings, souls, spirits, and the tiniest movement—are evident in the presence of the Imam, as the things of nature are manifest to man's sight, but are not seen by the blind.

Some people have not reached the station of the Imamate, but because of their piety, worship, and fight against carnal desire, they have come to know the nature of certain activities and words, without having reached the state of perfection. This brings a clarity to their hearts that is not seen by others. But as for the Imam, there is a brightness so sharp and strong in his heart that he comprehends everything, and nothing is hidden from his sight.

The Sixth Point Is the Imam's Knowledge of the Needs of the Creatures

The Imam is aware of the needs of the people in this world and in the Hereafter, because it is the Imam who guides souls to the Truth and leads them to perfection. This is mentioned in the Qur'an as

يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا

...who guide by Our Command,

and the priority of the station of the Imam to prophethood is quite clear in the verses God speaks to His friend Abraham.

Above all, as the words and actions of the Imam are based on reality and Truth, he has attained the position where his commands and prohibitions are straight from God Himself. Therefore, his actions are revealed to him and therefore real "revelations." Since the needs of the slaves are not hidden from God, neither are they hidden from the Imams, who are the perfect channels of His blessings to all beings. It is quite clear that the Imam's knowledge is the very Knowledge of God.

The Seventh Point Is the Perfection of the Imam's Soul as Superior to That of Mankind

The Divine authority of the Imam consists in a perfect soul superior to all other beings. It is impossible for anyone to be superior to the

Imam in spirituality, ethics, or good deeds, because the way to God is through the spirituality of the soul and good attributes. And since the Imam is superior to others in this respect, he guides them to the Truth. Accordingly, if there are two people, one of whom has this quality, he can act as the Imam. One whose spiritual superiority is clear and vast can lead another who is blind, in which case he is the Imam.

In contrast, a weak person cannot direct or lead a strong one. These seven questions form the basic discussion regarding the Imamate, and other questions are secondary.

The Superiority of Imam Ali in All Spiritual Perfection

There is no hesitation or doubt about the superiority of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib among all beings other than the Seal of the Prophets, Mohammad. This is agreed by friends and enemies alike, and is due to his spiritual manifestations during the twenty-three-year period of prophethood and the thirty years after the Prophet, and proved by his knowledge, tenacity, right judgment, and generosity, taking refuge in God and being dissolved in Him, and spiritual knowledge and comprehension of the Truth.

Apart from this, there are many sayings of the Prophet that have been narrated concerning him, such as:

أنتَ مِنّي بِمَنزِلَةِ هرونَ مِن موسى ومثل انَّ عَلِيّاً وَزيري، وَوصِيّي، ووارثي، وَاخي في الدّنيا وَ الاخِرَة، وَخَليفَتي مِن بَعدي، وَوَلِيُّ كُلِّ مُؤمِنٍ مِن بَعدي، وَانَّ عَلِيّا امِيرُ المُؤمنينَ، وَسَيِّدُ المُسلِمينَ وَ يَعسوبُ المُؤمنينَ، وَقائدُ الغُرِّ المُحَجَّلينَ، وَهُوَ الصِّدّيقُ الاكبَرُ، وَالفاروقُ الاكبَرُ، وعالِمُ هذِهِ الأُمّةِ، وَذُو قَرنِها.

You are to me as Aaron is to Moses. Indeed, Ali is my minister, Guardian and heir, my brother in the world and in the Hereafter, and he is my caliph after me, and the master of every believer after me. Indeed, he is the master of the faithful, the chief of the Muslims and the believers, the leader of the dignified, the most trustworthy, and the greatest distinguisher of right from falsehood, and he is the scholar for this nation and brings them together.

Apart from the narration:

أنا مدينة العِلمِ وعليٌّ بابها

"I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate," there are many others concerning his knowledge, and all of them prove that Ali's soul was linked with that of the Prophet.

Some narrations state that Ali had specific superior qualities. In addition, there are many narrations by the Shi'a and others maintaining that Ali was not only superior to mankind but to the Prophets and Messengers as well. Concerning his superiority and innocence, the Prophet has said: "Ali is the best of mankind, and whoever rejects him is an unbeliever."

Shaykh Hāfiz Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhim Qundūzī Ḥanafi narrates from *Mawaddah al-Qurbā* that 'Atā said:

قالت: ذلك خَيْرُ البَشَرِ لا يَشُكُّ فيهِ الكافِرُ قال: سئلت عائشة عن عَلِي

I asked 'Ā'ishah about Ali, and she said that he was the best of the men she knew and that no one would doubt it except the unbelievers.[182]

It is narrated concerning Ali that the Prophet told him:

يا علىّ، أنت خير البشر، ما يشكّ فيه إلّا كافر

O Ali, you are the best of mankind, and no one doubts this except the unbeliever.[183]

And it is narrated by Ḥudayfa that the following was said:

انه قال: علىٌّ خير البشر و من أبى فقد كفر

Ali is the best of men, and whoever rejects him is an unbeliever.[184]

Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh Anṣāri narrates that the Prophet said:

عَلِيٌّ خَيْرُ البَشَرِ، مَنْ شَكَّ فيه فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

Ali is the best of men, and whoever rejects him has covered the truth and he is an unbeliever.[185]

And they have narrated that Umm Hani, the daughter of Abī Ṭālib and sister of Ali, said to the Prophet:

أفضل البريّة عند الله من نام في قبره، ولم يشكّ في علىٍّ و ذرّيته أنّهم خير البريّه

In God's sight the best of men are the ones who [in order to taste death before they die] lie in their grave and those who have no doubt about Ali and his offspring.

Imam Bāqir Muhammad ibn Ali has narrated that his grandfathers said:

سئل رسول الله صلّي الله عليهِ و آلهِ قال: خيرها، و أتقاها، و أفضلها، و أقربها إلي الجنةِ أقربها مِني ولا أتقي ولا أقرب إليّ مِن عليّ بن أبيطالبِ.

"They asked the Messenger who the best of mankind were, and he said: 'The best of them, the most pious of them, the most virtuous of them, and the nearest to Paradise is one who is nearest to me, and no one is more pious and near to me than Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.'"[186]

The Narrations on Ascension Denote the Guardianship of Ali

It has been narrated from Ali that the Prophet said to him:

إنِّي رَأَيتُ اسمَكَ مَقرُوناً بِاسمِي في أربعةِ مواطِن، فلَمَّا بَلَغتُ بَيتَ المُقدسِ في مِعرَاجِي إلَى السَّماءِ وَجَدتُ عَلَى صَخرَةٍ بِهَا: لَا إلَهَ إلَّا اللهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللهِ أيَّدتُهُ بِعلي وَزِيرِهِ، ولَمَّا انتَهَيتُ إلَى سِدرَةِ المُنتَهَى وَجَدتُ عَلَيهَا: إنِّي أنَا اللهُ لَا إلَهَ إلَّا أنَا وَحدِي مُحَمَّدٌ صَفوَتِي مِن خَلقِي أيَّدتُهُ بعلي وَزِيرِهِ وَنَصَرتُهُ بِهِ، ولَمَّا انتَهَيتُ إلَى عَرشِ رَبِّ العَالَمِينَ، وَجَدتُ عَلَى قوائمَهُ: لَا إلَهَ إلَّا اللهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللهِ إلَّا أنا، أُحَمَّدٌ حبيبي مِن خَلقِي، أيَّدتُهُ بعليٍّ وَزِيرِهِ، وَنَصَرتُهُ بِهِ فلمّا وصلت الجنة وجدت مكتوباً على بابِ الجنةِ: لا إله إلّا أنا، ومحمّدٌ حبيبي مِن خلقي، أيدته بعليٍّ وزيرِهِ، ونصرته بِهِ.

O Ali, in four stages [of the *mi'rāj*] I saw your name connected to my name.

Once when we were ascending to Heaven and I reached the Holy Realm, I noticed carved on a rock: "There is no god except God, and Mohammad is His Prophet (s)—I confirmed him through Ali who is his Minister."

And when I reached the *Sidrat al-Muntahā* I saw these words: "There is no deity but Me, Alone, and Mohammad is the chosen one among My creatures, and I confirmed him through Ali, his Minister—I assist him through Ali."

When I reached the Firmament of God, the Lord of all Being, I noticed written on the columns: "I am God, there is no deity except Me, Mohammad is My beloved, and I chose him from among My creatures through Ali, his Minister, and I assisted him through Ali."

Then, when I reached Paradise, there was written on its gate: "There is no deity except Me, Mohammad is my beloved, and I chose him from among My creatures through Ali, his Minister, and I assisted him through Ali."[187]

What Gabriel, Appearing as Diḥya, Said on *Wilāyah*

Khārazmī Abul Mu'ayyed Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad through his chain narrates from his uncle, Sa'īd ibn Jābir, that Ibn 'Abbās said:

The Prophet (s) was at his home early one morning before anyone came to him, when Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib entered the house and saw the Prophet (s) sleeping in the courtyard with his head on the lap of Diḥya ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi [Diḥya ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi was a good-looking man of Medina, and whenever Gabriel came to the Prophet he appeared in Diḥya's form]. Ali (as) said: "Peace be upon you, O Diḥya! How is the Prophet (s)?"

Diḥya answered: "O brother, the Prophet (s) is all right."

Ali (as) prayed for him, and said:

جزاك الله عنّا خيراً أهل البيتِ

"O Diḥya, in gratitude for your having saved us, may God bless you on behalf of the Household."

And Diḥya said:

You mean very much to me, and I cannot praise or thank you enough.

انتَ اميرُ المُؤمنينَ، وَقائدُ الغُرِّ المُحَجَّلين، وَانتَ سَيِّدُ وُلدِ آدمَ يَوْمَ القيمة، ماخلا النَّبيّين وَالمُرسَلينَ، لِواء الحَمدِ بيدِكَ يَوْمَ القيمة، تَرِفُّ انتَ وَشيعَتُكَ يَوْمَ القيمةِ الى الجَنَّةِ مَعَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ حِزْبِهِ الى الجِنانِ زَفّاً زَفّاً، وَقَدْ افْلَحَ مَنْ تَوَلّاكَ وَخَسِرَ مَنْ تَخَلّاكَ فَيُحِبُّ مُحَمَّدٍ حَبُوكَ، وَ مُبْغِضوكَ لَنْ تَنالَهُمْ شَفاعَةُ مُحَمَّد

You are the master of faithful! You are the leader of the radiant faces in Paradise, and you are the master of the people, and the Banner of Praise is in your hand on the Day of Resurrection.

On that Day, as the bride is led to the bridal chamber, you will be taken to Paradise along with your followers, as well as Mohammad with his disciples. Victory and blessing are for those who follow you, and whoever does not follow you will be lost. Therefore, through Mohammad's love they will love you, and Mohammad's intercession does not reach the one who hates you.[188]

Then Diḥya said: "O Ali, O you who is chosen by God, come closer to me!" Ali (as) went closer and Diḥya lifted the Messenger's head from his lap and let Ali put his head on his lap instead.

In the meantime, the Prophet (s) asked: "O Ali, what is going on?"

Ali (as) said: "O Messenger of God, it was this," and he informed him of what had transpired between him and Diḥya.

The Prophet (s) said: "O Ali, he was not Diḥya. That was Gabriel, and he called you by the very name God has called you; it is he who establishes affection for you in the hearts of the believers and fear of you in the hearts of the unbelievers."[189]

Seven Issues Concerning the Imamate of Ali

There are many narrations from the Prophet concerning the superiority of Ali and his being the master of the children of Adam. Now we refer to a few of them. According to the seven issues already mentioned, the position of Imam is specified only for Ali, who invited the people to God with no laxity, doubt, or ignorance in his words or actions.

Since the Imam dominates the Kingdom of Heaven, he never makes mistakes, and since his actions are true, he never doubts or questions, or ever regrets what he has done. This is because God does not question or regret any of His affairs.

Those who regret and have remorse do so because of ignorance of what they are doing. They perceive an unpleasant affair as pleasant, and without a second thought, embark upon it. And then later, when they notice their mistakes, they regret and become remorseful.

A righteous person never regrets. No Imam has been regretful of his actions, and this is a sign of his care in doing things. Above all, the Imam assigns each individual's duty in every task without delay or postponing it for some other time. He does not have to wait for things to become clear to him, because everything is already as clear as crystal to him, and he can respond right away.

'Umar was unable to answer many simple questions on religion when he was asked. On the other hand, they would ask Ali a great many questions for which the cleverest mathematicians took hours to formulate answers. Ali would answer straight away. Could this perhaps be compared with even electrical activity? Even electrical devices take several seconds to calculate answers, but Ali would answer immediately as if the answers were as clear as light to him. He would answer many judicial questions on the spot, each of which would have otherwise needed expert calculation.

Abū Bakr regretted being caliph several times, and constantly said:

اقيلوني، اقيلوني ولست بخيركم.

"Take the burden of the caliphate from my shoulders; I am not the right person among you."[190] If the caliphate was given to him at God's Command, then why would he speak like this? And if was not at God's Command, then why did he take it?

The day after Abū Bakr paid homage in Saqīfah, he ascended the pulpit in the mosque of the Prophet, and said in his sermon:

أيها الناس، فإني قد وليت عليكم، ولست بخيركم، فإن احسنت فاعينوني، وإن اسأت فقوموني

اطيعوني ما اطعت الله، وإذا عصيت الله ورسوله، فلا طاعة لي عليكم.

O people, now I have taken the guardianship and authority in my hand, I am the best among you; so if you see that I carry out my duty in the best way, then help me, but if I make a mistake then correct me.[191]

He went on to where he said: "Obey me insofar as I obey God, but if I should oppose God and His Messenger, then you are freed of obedience to me."[192]

Ṭabarī says that when Abū Bakr began lecturing to the people, he said:

أيها الناس إنما أنا مثلكم وإني لا أدري لعلكم ستكلفونني ما كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه و

آله وسلم يطيق، إن الله اصطفى محمداً على العالمين، وعصمه من الآفات، وإنما أنا متبع، ولست بمبتوع،

فإن استقمت فاتبعوني وإن زغت فقوموني، وكذالك يقول: وإن لي شيطانا يعتريني فإذا اتاني فاجتنبوني.

> O people, I am like you, and perhaps you ask me certain difficult questions that I cannot answer—questions that only the Prophet (s) could answer. God chose Mohammad for all the people of the world and He preserved him from calamity. But I am obedient to the religion and I have brought nothing with me. If in this position I carry out my duties in the proper way, then follow me, but if I deviate, then correct me.

He continued:

Surely there is a devil about me who misleads me, and you must keep away from me when he comes to me.[193]

Five Objections to Abū Bakr's Sermon

The First Objection

First of all, he concedes that he is not the best among the people. He should therefore be asked why he accepted the caliphate, and why he did not leave this important position to the rightful master. Why did he want to become the most learned Imam? How was he satisfied to make Ali—the main treasury of God's Knowledge and the soul of the Prophet—follow him? Why did you make him swear unconditional allegiance to your command? And by what knowledge or moral attitudes did you want to lead the believers to the perfection of the heavenly Kingdom you were controlling?

The Second Objection

Secondly, you say: "If I do well, you follow me, but if I make mistakes, then correct me." Therefore, you have left the standard for your rulings with us, and we are the Imam for you, not you the Imam for us!

Besides, how can we distinguish bad from good? If we distinguish it by ourselves, then we need no Imam, and if a rightful Imam tells us what to do, then we are obliged to follow him, and you too must surrender to his command.

The Third Objection

Thirdly, you say: "You may ask me certain difficult questions that I cannot answer—questions that only the Prophet could answer."

It is quite likely that such problems will occur, but who let you sit in the place of the Prophet if you are unable to answer our questions? Did you not hear the Prophet time and again say:

عَلِيٌّ، يَقضِي دَيْنِي،

Ali is going to repay my debt and he is responsible for the Guardianship?

You yourself have narrated that the Prophet said:

عَلِيٌّ مَعَ الْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ مَعَ عَلِي

Ali is with the Truth, and the Truth is with Ali!

Did you not congratulate the Commander of the Believers on the Day of Ghadīr al-Khumm?

If you cannot accept the burden of Guardianship, then why do you sit in the place of the Prophet, and take the position of Guardianship?

The Fourth Objection

Fourthly, you say: "Obey me as long as I am obeying God and the Prophet, but if you see me do wrong, then reject me."

Therefore you are similar to us, but are not our master, so why should we obey you? Now you obey us! Which of the Divine laws obliges us to obey you?

Apart from that, in our religion we need a leader and instructor, through whom we learn how to pray to God and obey His Prophet, but how would we know if your rulings are correct? Only a teacher of the Qur'an who knows God and His Messenger well, and is an expert in the rules of Islam, can distinguish our good actions from the bad. Moreover, how can we correct you if you are wrong? You are what you are, and cannot be corrected. You are not content to leave the caliphate and act against God and His Messenger's will. No matter how much the people try to correct you, you resist it, and your main deviation is the usurpation of the caliphate.

Did Ali not take you to task and reproach you while the Prophet's body still lay unburied by his graveside? Did he not teach you concerning his superiority in the mosque? Did Fāṭimah not speak of your deviation in her sermon? Did she not say:

يا ابا بكر ما اسرع ما أغررتم على أهل بيت رسول الله؟

O Abū Bakr, do not make haste to usurp that which is for the Household!

Did the great followers, and the Banī Hāshim, who rejected paying homage, not point out your mistakes? So why did you not correct them?

They did not insist on their words, but if they had, there would have been bloodshed and the main objective would have come to nothing. Did 'Uthmān openly reject the command of the Prophet? Why did he not listen to the Muslims when they reproached him? Why did he insist on his demand?

The Muslims told him: "Either leave the position of caliph or fulfil the rules and traditions of the Prophet." He did neither and

persisted, and in the meantime he invited Mu'āwiyah and the army of Shām to help him fight against the Muslims.

The Muslims could not correct the oppressive caliphs who were ruling, for who can correct one who holds power in his hands and is not ready to return it to its rightful owner?

Was Muā'wiyah corrected? Were the Banī Omayyad's caliphs and those of the Banī 'Abbās corrected?

Anyone who wanted to warn them, or even advise them, was put to death by the rejecters, who in broad daylight killed the son of the Prophet and his family between the two rivers.

The Fifth Objection

Abū Bakr, be careful what you say in your sermons! Your words pave way for all oppressive caliphs. You have said: "I have a devil who comes to me, so if he comes, then repel him from me!"

We wish you had not mentioned this word. The leader who believes a devil is by his side, and guides man instead of expelling the evil, is no more a leader but the devil himself.

The Imam of the believers destroyed the devil, and has said:

اعزبي عني يا دنيا، قد طلّقتكِ ثلاثاً

O world, leave me on my own, I have divorced you thrice.

Firm as a mountain he declared it. And he has said:

> O mankind, come to me, I am the Guardian of God and His most sincere worshipper. The Verse of Purification has been sent down for us, and I am at the station of infallibility. Ask me whatever you want before you lose me; I am the gate of knowledge and the bearer of the heavy burden of messengerhood and the debt-payer of the Prophet; I have the dominion of the Heavenly Kingdom and the truth of all things. I am the reality of the soul of the Prophet; I am the master of every Muslim man and woman; I am the Guardian, minister and heir of the secrets of the Messenger.

Abū Bakr's Nine Regrets at His Death

Mas'ūdi says:

ولما احتضر ابوبكر قال: ما آسى على شيء إلّا على ثلاث فعلتها، ووددت أني تركتها، و ثلاث تركتها ووددت أني فعلتها، وثلاث وددت أني سألت رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وآله عنها، فأمّا الثلاث التي وددت أني تركتها، فوددت أني لم أكن كشفت بيت فاطمة، وذكر في ذالك كلاماً كثيراً.

When Abū Bakr's death was fast approaching, he said:

I regret nothing more than three things I have done and wish I had not done; and I regret three things that I did not do but wish that I had done.

And I wanted to ask three things of the Prophet (s) but I did not ask. One of the three things that I did but wish I had not done is that I inspected Zahrā''s home, and I wish I had not done so. He spoke much concerning this.[194]

Apart from Mas'ūdi, Ṭabarī in his book on history, Ibn Qatiba in *al-Imamate wa al-Siyāsa*, and Ibn 'Abd Rabah in *'Iqd al-Farid* have narrated this statement.[195]

On this same topic, in *al-Ghadīr*[196] Allāmah Amīnī says that the chains of this narration are correct, that all the narrations are genuine, and that four of them are in *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sitta* (six famous Sunni *hadith* collections).

Some contemporaries, such as Farid Wajdi in the *Encyclopedia* and Ahmad Amin Meṣri in his book, have interpreted these words of Abū Bakr as a statement to wipe out his mistakes, and to show that his government was democratic and that the people were free in what they did.

We have tried to show in our previous discussions, and, God willing, will show in future explanations, that the government of Islam is based on the Truth, but not the votes of the people, whether a majority or a minority.

The clear text of the Qur'an, and the correct rules and traditions of the Prophet and the Infallible Imams, as well as the wise, show that the reality of the Truth is to be followed, and not something selected by votes. Certain things are to be avoided, even if the rest of the world approves of them.

This is the major difference between the Shi'a and the Sunnis, and all the other problems derive from this.

Since the rise of Islam, the Shi'a have always cried out and reasoned that the Truth must be followed, not the votes of the people. The Imamate is appointed, not elected. People must follow the Truth, and the rightful Imam must be chosen by God, just as the Prophets are sent by God, and people have no right to choose their Prophets.

The Shi'a have proven that in ruling and governing the people, there is no difference between messengerhood and the Imamate: they are two saplings that have grown from a single tree, or like two babies suckling the same breast.

The common people say: "The Imamate is a superficial rule, so it would not matter if one followed an ignorant or sinful leader." Of course, according to this logic, Abū Bakr is considered a liberal thinker—as some Sunni modernists like to say.

Nowadays "liberal" has a broader meaning that is quite different from not letting the Banī Hāshim, the Immigrants, and the supporters know about the oath of allegiance. It is not as if they broke away from the side of Zahrā', the daughter of the Prophet, and avoided punishing Khālid ibn Walīd, who had killed Mālik ibn Nuwayra, just to rape his beautiful wife the same night! And there are a number of wrongdoings that countries in the West may not consider infringements, although their explanations are unreasonable.

However, the Shi'a uproot this logic, and prove the weakness of these ideas with wise and philosophical arguments. This was previously explained in light of Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī's narration of the Prophet's having said to Ammār Yāsir: "If all the people of the world were on one side and Ali were on the other, you should take Ali's side and leave the others to themselves." The Prophet then clearly stated: "Ali does not let you deviate from the right path; he does not guide you to the wrong path. Certainly Ali is on the path of Truth, and you must obey him even if all the people of the world are against him!"[197]

Lesson Fourteen:
The Necessity of Following the Most Learned

LESSON FOURTEEN

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

And blessings be upon Mohammad and his pure Household, and may God's curse be on his enemies from now until the Day of Resurrection. And there is no power or strength except for the Most High and Glorious God.

God, the Wise, has stated in His Noble Book:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ.

And when Abraham said to his father and his people, "Indeed, I am dissociated from that which you worship; (I worship) only Him Who made me, and He will surely guide me." And, he left that as a word to endure among those who came after him, that they may return [to Allah]. (43:26–28).

The Imamate's Continuing Position in the Dynasty of Abraham until the Day of Resurrection

By this verse we can clearly understand that the status of Imamate and Leadership began with Abraham and will continue through his lineage until the Day of Resurrection.

To make this clear, the word براء is in the infinitive and is drawn from the verb بَرِيءَ يَبْرَءُ whose adjective is بَرِيء in Arabic, and a brief explanation is needed as to why the word *barā'a*, which in this text has been translated as "avoid," is drawn from *bara* or *yabra'*, whose adjective is *barī'*. *Inna dhi bari'ūn* was originally *Innani dhū barā'a*, but here it is abbreviated. And the pronoun of the doer ("Himself," i.e., God) refers either to *barā'a*, whom Abraham spoke to, or to "guidance."

However, if we say its reference is *barā'a*, it refers to Unity, that is, لا إله إلّا الله, *There is no god except God.*

Since أنني براءٌ ممّا تعبدون إلّا الّذي فطرني implies the same meaning as لا إله إلّا الله, the word "Unity" has only one meaning, which is a reference to the objective pronoun in وَ جَعَلَهَا .

Indeed, I am dissociated from that which you worship; (I worship) only Him Who made me, and He will surely guide me means that *There is no god except God*; and "Unity" is the object of "I assigned him."

The Meaning of *"There Is No God except God"*

According to Arabic grammar, the vowel appears as the sound of "o" after the final letter of الله, and the phrase reads: لا الهَ الا اللهُ موجود which means الله explains الهَ in order to emphasize the unity of God.

In other words, it means "There is no god except *the one and only existent* God." Therefore it is obvious that all guidance comes from God and is attributed to Him.

This guidance can be transferred to anyone who merits it, and is thus given to creatures. When Abraham says سيهدين, this points to absolute and everlasting guidance, which is the very guidance of the Imam, and hence the need of the world for Guardianship.

As with the interpretation of the following verse:

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

Verily, I have appointed you a leader for mankind (2:124),

which is addressed directly to Abraham, the duty of an Imam is to teach all mankind to God as God Himself has directed him. Therefore, the teaching of the Imam mirrors that of God.

When the reference to the pronoun is *barā'a*, then it means the Guardianship that God has assigned in the lineage of Abraham for guiding people to Unity and the Truth. Therefore, it is clear that it remains in Abraham's lineage for all time, and that all his descendants have this station, for never is the Imamate taken from them.

Also, the two words "Unity" and "Guardianship" are specified for those in the lineage who invite to the Truth, whereas others in the lineage are invited to the Truth. Therefore, the phrase فِي عَقِبِهِ ("are followed") concerns those in the lineage who are given the position of Leadership, and the phrase يَرْجِعُونَ ("they may follow") concerns those in the lineage who may follow and receive guidance. In that case, each group of the lineage has its own way: some who form the Imamate and others who follow the Imam.

There is the following verse to consider:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ

Our Lord! And make us submissive to Thee, and from our progeny a nation submissive to Thee. (2:128)

Here Abraham's beseechment is clear, but there is already an answer in this verse:

لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

My covenant includes not wrongdoers. (2:124)

The secret of God's words comes to light after Abraham's beseechment: وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي *and of our seed.* They thus have the station of the Imamate and are not of the wrongdoers.

Also, in translations of some of the narrations concerning this verse, "the remainder" has been interpreted as the Imamate, and some have speculated about Ḥusayn ibn Ali, the Master of Martyrs. In *Majma' al-Bayān* it is narrated from Imam Sādiq that "the function of 'the remainder' is the Imamate, who on the Day of Resurrection will become manifest."

And if the reference of the pronoun is "guidance," it becomes clear that this is the Divine Guidance, the very station of Guardianship and the Imamate, by means of which the people move from unbelief towards the Unity of God. Therefore, the pronoun refers either to the avoidance of or the belief in Unity, or to guidance and the Imamate, and the verse itself concerns the continuing station of leadership for the descendants of Abraham.

For the position of Unity and Guardianship, it is necessary for the attributes of mankind to relate to the attributes of God, and they are therefore the attributes of power and knowledge.

The Imam as the Most Learned of All Nations

Thus the Imam must have a comprehensive knowledge such as no other amongst his nation and followers can achieve, a knowledge that is pure and untarnished and attracts the followers to the Imam.

This is why Abraham turns to his guardian, Āzar, and says:

يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا

O my father! Indeed, to me there has come knowledge that has not reached thee, so follow me: I will lead thee on a straight path. (19:43)

As may be seen in this verse, he considers it necessary for Āzar to follow him, because of his lack of the knowledge that Abraham

possesses. Therefore, it is quite clear that the one without knowledge should follow the one who has, and needs no explanation.

The Necessity of Following the Learned in the Natural, Intellectual and Spiritual Stages

Based on this main rule, Abraham fulfilled his duty and announced his mission to Āzar. Therefore, according to the rule of jurisprudence, it is necessary for the inexperienced to follow the most learned. Before being a religious command, this is a spiritual command, and before being a spiritual command, it is a natural, conscientious command. These three stages follow the logic that acknowledging the opinions of the learned is necessary, and it is known that contentment within society is due to government by the learned.

Since knowledge is similar to light and life—as the spirit of life—then as much light and life as there is within society, it has that much spirit and vigor. In other words, there is more strength in a body when it becomes spiritually stronger, and the stronger a man is the more easily he moves towards perfection. But if he is weak, his soul becomes weaker. In his weakness a man falls behind in the achievement of Divine favor, and has less benefit in life.

The verse above is of much benefit in the field of religious jurisprudence, as well as providing guidance for religious knowledge. It also shows the necessity of following the most learned amongst the people at any given time, although these days it has proven difficult to come across learned scholars who grasp the import of this verse.

In the *Ghāyat al-Marām* of Shaykh Ṭūsi, it is narrated through his chain in *al-Amāli*:

> I heard from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, from his father, that his grandfather Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (as) said: "Once Imam Hasan went to see Mu'āwiyah when they had a peace treaty, and as they were sitting in session, Mu'āwiyah stood up to deliver a speech, and began..."

It is said that later on Imam Hasan wrote a lecture and then stated:

الحمدلله المستحمد بالآلاء وتابع النعماء

"Praise be to God, Who is praised for His blessings and favors..." and he embarked upon a lengthy and extensive sermon that included the most subtle points concerning the nobility of the

Household of the Prophet, quoting the Verse of Purification and others, and a few historical events.

The Destiny of a Nation Whose Government Is Not in the Hands of a Knowing Ruler Is Ruin

In his sermon he added:

The Prophet said:

مَا وَلَّتْ اُمَّةٌ اَمْرَهَا رَجُلًا قَطُّ وَفِيهِمْ مَنْ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ مِنْهُ اِلَّا لَمْ يَزَلْ يَذْهَبُ سَفَالًا حَتّٰى يَرْجِعُوا اِلٰى مَا تَرَكُوا.

Never should a clan or nation trust its affairs to someone when there is one wiser than he and most learned, for gradually the condition of that nation deteriorates. They must stop and find the most learned in the nation to govern them.[198]

This is briefly mentioned by Shaykh Ṭūsi in *al-Amāli*, and he has narrated from the Prophet the same saying concerning the necessity of the most learned leadership.[199]

And in *Mustatrafāt al-Sarā'ir*, Ibn Idris relates from Abī al-Qāsim ibn Qūlūyeh that Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq narrated that the Prophet said:

مَنْ اَمَّ قَوْماً وَفِيهِمْ مَنْ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ مِنْهُ اَوْ اَفْقَهُ مِنْهُ، لَمْ يَزَلْ اَمْرُهُمْ فِي سَفالٍ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيمَةِ، وَمَنْ دَعٰى اِلٰى اَضْلالٍ لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي سَخَطِ اللهِ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ مِنْهُ، وَمَنْ مَاتَ بِغَيْرِ اِمامٍ مَاتَ مِيتَةً جاهِلِيَّةً.

If there is one who takes the rein of a nation and governs it, whilst ir the meantime there is among the people another who is the most learned and knowledgeable in jurisprudence, then the affairs of that nation constantly deteriorate until the Day of Resurrection. And whoever calls the people to corruption and misleads them will incur the wrath of God until he repents and stops his bad behavior. And he who dies without having an Imam, his death is alike with those in the age of ignorance.[200]

Concerning the necessity of government by the most learned, scholars have their own reasons, for as already mentioned, the problem of leadership is a vital question.

The leader forms the spirit and determination of society, for as much as the leader's determination is pure and correct, it is useful and fruitful for society, which becomes good and is always ready to develop.

All the people of a society are members of one body, and as the soul rules the physical body and guides it either to right or wrong, so the leader governs the people in a similar way. He can lead them either to the path of perfection and happiness or to that of adversity and loss.

Ali as the Most Learned of the People

There are numerous narrations from the Prophet concerning the knowledge and superiority of Ali. Various scholars have written a great many books on this and have commented on his infinite knowledge. It has been so logically explained that Muslims should take it most seriously.

The narrations have detailed explanations from different angles, but we give here one or two of them explained in brief.

Concerning the narrations that show the abundant knowledge of Ibn Bābwayh, referring to his chain, he relates from Imam Bāqir from his father, from his father's father, the response when the following verse was revealed:

...and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear book. (Qur'an, 36:12)

وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ.

Abū Bakr and 'Umar stood up and said: "O Prophet, does the *Glorious Divine Ledger* mean the Torah?"

The Prophet (s) answered: "No."

They asked: "Is it the Bible?"

He answered: "No."

Sometime later, Ali (as) entered the room and the Messenger (s) said:

هو هذا، إنّه إمام الّذي احصي الله تبارك وتعالي فيه علم كلّ شيء.

This is the *Glorious Divine Ledger;* this is the very same Imam in whom God has assigned all knowledge.[201]

On the narrations that describe how the Prophet opened a thousand different gates of knowledge to Ali, each leading to a thousand more, Sayyid Ḥāshim Baḥrānī says that Abū Ḥāmid Ghazzāli, a noble and well-known scholar, in his *Bayān al-Ilm al-Ladunni,* says of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib:

قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عليه السّلام إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صلّي الله عليه و آله و سلم أَدْخَلَ لِسَانَهُ فِي فَمِي، فَانْفَتَحَ فِي قَلْبِي أَلْفُ بَابٍ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَفَتَحَ لِي كُلُّ بَابٍ أَلْفَ بَابٍ، وَقَالَ أَيْضاً لَوْ ثُنِيَتْ لِي وِسَادَةٌ وَجَلَسْتُ عَلَيْهَا، لَحَكَمْتُ بَيْنَ أَهْلِ التَّوْرَاةِ بِتَوْرَاتِهِمْ وَأَهْلِ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِإِنْجِيلِهِمْ وَأَهْلِ الْقُرْآنِ بِقُرْآنِهِمْ، وَهَذِهِ الْمَرْتَبَةُ لَا تُنَالُ بِمُجَرَّدِ التَّعَلُّمِ، بَلْ يَتَمَكَّنُ الْمَرْءُ فِي هَذِهِ الْمَرْتَبَةِ بِقُوَّةِ الْعِلْمِ اللَّدُنِّيِّ.

Ali, the Commander of the Believers, said: "The Prophet (s) placed his tongue in my mouth and a thousand gates of knowledge were revealed to me; then each gate opened a thousand others."

And Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (as) said: "If they prepared everything for me to govern and they strengthened me to command, I would command the people of the Torah with their Book, and the people of the Bible with the Bible, and the people of the Qur'an with the Qur'an."

Then, Ghazzāli says: "This is a state that no one can achieve through schooling, study, or the employment of tutors—it is only attained through inspired knowledge."[202]

And among the narrations on the Prophet's saying: "I am the city of knowledge and wisdom and Ali is its gate," Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh Anṣāri has narrated from *Ghāyat al-Marām* from the book of *Manāqib* by Ibn al-Maghāzilī, that the Prophet held Ali by the arm and said:

هذا امِيرُ الْبَرَرَةِ، وَقَاتِلُ الْكَفَرَةِ، مَنصُورٌ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ، مَخْذُولٌ مَنْ خَذَلَهُ، ثُمَّ مَدَّ بِهَا صَوْتَهُ، فَقَالَ: انَا مَدِينَةُ الْعِلْمِ وَعَلِيٌّ بَابُهَا، فَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْعِلْمَ فَلْيَأْتِ الْبَاب.

This is the commander of the beneficent, and the destroyer of the unbelievers; he who supports him will be supported, and whoever considers him low will become abject and low. Then the Prophet (s) raised his voice and said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate, so he who seeks knowledge should go to the gate.[203]

On the narrations concerning the statement:

سلوني قبل أن تفقدوني

Do ask me before missing me.

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid has said in the *Sharh Nahj al-Balāgha* that all people have unanimously said that never has a man among the followers of the Prophet, nor any of the scholars, ever spoken these words.[204]

But the *hadith* that tell of the commands of Ali are better and the most reliable.

It is narrated in the *Ghāyat al-Marām* from Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad, who is known as the most noble of the well-known scholars, from Abū Sa'īd Khidri, who said that the Prophet had said:

إنّ أقضي امتي علي بن أبيطالب

The best one who commands in my nation is Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib.[205]

There are many *hadith* telling of how Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān referred to Ali regarding the creed and knowledge. In the *Ghāyat al-Marām* from the *Musnad* by Ahmad Ḥanbal, he relates through his chain from Yahyā ibn Sa'īd ibn Musayyib, who said:

قال: كان عمر يتعوذ بالله من معضلة ليس لها ابو الحسن

Whenever he had a problem, 'Umar beseeched God when Ali was not present.[206]

Through his chains he has also narrated from Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad, from Zayd ibn Ali, from his father, from his grandfather concerning Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib:

> In the period when 'Umar ruled, they brought a pregnant woman to him to confess her adultery. She pleaded guilty and 'Umar ordered his men to take her away and stone her. On the way, the woman saw Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib. Ali asked the men: "What has she committed that you are going to punish her?" They said: "She has committed adultery, and 'Umar has ordered that she must be stoned."
>
> Ali took the woman back to 'Umar and asked him: "Is it you who have ordered her to be stoned?"
>
> 'Umar answered: "Yes, because she herself has confessed her crime."

فقال علي: هذا سلطانك عليها فما سلطانك على الذي في بطنها، ولعلك انتهرتها واخفتها فقال عمر: قد كان ذلك.

قال: او ما سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله يقول: لا حد على معترف بعد بلاء انه من قيدت او حبست او نهرت فلا اقرار له، فخلا سبيلها ثم قال عمر: عجزت النساء ان تلد مثل علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه لولا علي لهلك عمر.

The Commander of the Believers said: "O 'Umar! Her confessing proves that you can punish her, but what has made you punish the baby in her womb, and kill that innocent by stoning the mother? Or perhaps you have frightened her into telling the truth and she confessed the adultery."

'Umar said: "Yes, it is true."

Then Ali said: "Have you not heard that the Prophet said: 'Anyone who confesses a crime out of fear and fright must not be punished. If a man is chained and put in jail and threatened into confessing a crime, his confession is not valid'?"

After Ali had said this, he freed the woman, and when 'Umar heard these words, he said: "No woman is able to give birth to a child such as Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, and if Ali did not exist, 'Umar would perish."[207]

Also through his chain he has quoted Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb, who narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq that in the period of Abū Bakr's caliphate they took to him a man who had drunk wine.

Abū Bakr asked: "Have you drunk wine?"

He said: "Yes."

Abū Bakr said: "It is illegal to drink alcohol."

The man answered: "I have embraced Islam, and I have a strong belief in my religion, but my home is somewhere that everybody drinks alcohol, and all of them consider it lawful. If I had known that drinking alcohol was unlawful I would surely have avoided it."

Abū Bakr turned to 'Umar and asked: "What is your opinion of this man?"

'Umar said: "The problem is that the answer is not found with Abū al-Hasan, so call Ali, for the law regarding that is in Ali's hands."

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) went on:

Abū Bakr and 'Umar stood up, along with the others at the session, and took the man with them to Ali. Abū Bakr first told Ali the man's story, and then the man narrated the event.

The Imam said: "Send someone with him to the Muhājir (Supporters) and the Anṣār (Immigrants) and ask them whether any of them has ever recited the verse of wine to him. If anyone has recited it, then ask him to be a witness to this man."

They carried out his command, but neither of the two groups gave evidence that they had recited to him the verse concerning the banning of alcohol.

Imam Ali (as) then let him go, after telling him: "From now on, we will punish you if you drink alcohol."[208]

And there are *hadith* relating that the Truth is always with Ali and accompanies him wherever he goes.

In the third section of *al-Jam' Bayn al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sitta* (*The Collective of the Six Precise*), written by Imam al-Ḥaramayn, the virtues of Ali are narrated from *Saḥīḥ al-Būkhārī*, and that Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib had said:

قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله يقول: رحم الله عليا اللهم ادر الحق معه حيث دار.

I heard the Prophet (s) say: 'May God send His blessings upon Ali; O my Creator, wherever Ali goes accompany him with the Truth.'[209]

It is strange that many of these narrations were narrated by Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Ā'ishah, and 'Amr al-'Āṣ in addition to some of the followers of the Prophet.

In a book on the status of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, there are fifty *hadith* about the superiority of Ali narrated from the Prophet by the caliphs and their children and followers, all narrated by Sunni scholars, and each narration has its own explanations.[210]

One of them is a *hadith* where 'Umar speaks to a Bedouin:

وَيْحَكَ ما تَدْرِى مَنْ هذا؟ هذا مَوْلاىَ وَمَوْلى كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مَوْلاهُ فَلَيْسَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ.

Woe on you! Do you not know who this man is? This is my master and the master of all the faithful, and whoever takes not Ali as his master is not a believer![211]

Ibn 'Abbās' Regression about Their Preventing the Paper and Pen from Being Brought to the Prophet

The issue is that the Prophet was trying to instigate Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib as his deputy, and even as he lay on his deathbed he enjoined the gathering to follow Ali. He was so concerned over it that while taking his final breaths he asked for a pen and a piece of paper to write down his wish regarding the Imamate.

But alas, 'Umar prevented it, and instead of doing what the Prophet had asked, he said: "His disease has dominated him, and he is talking in delirium! The Book of God is enough for us!" Thence the Prophet passed away, leaving an ocean of sorrow.

From his authentic documents Ibn Sa'd quotes Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, who said that Ibn 'Abbās narrated:

قال: اشتكى النبي صلّى الله عليه وآله يوم الخميس، فجعل، يعني ابن عباس، يبكي ويقول:
يوم الخميس ومايوم الخميس!
إشتدّ بالنبي صلّى الله عليه وآله وجعه فقال: إئتوني بدواةٍ وصحيفةٍ أكتب لكم كتاباً لا تضلّوا بعده ابداً،
قال: فقال بعض من كان عنده: إنّ نبيّ الله ليهجر! قال: فقيل له، الا نأتيك بما طلبت؟
قال: او بعد ماذا؟ قال: فلم يدع به

On Thursday the Prophet was grieving over his illness, for his condition was serious, and he said: "Bring paper and a pen to write how to help you not go astray after me."[212]

Ibn 'Abbās says: "Some of the people in the session said: 'The Prophet is talking in delirium!'" Ibn 'Abbās continues: "Then the Prophet was asked: 'May we bring what you wanted?' and he said: 'What, after the event has happened!' That was all. The Prophet did not speak any more."

'Umar Prevented Them from Bringing Paper and a Pen for the Prophet

By means of another *hadith*, they narrate from Sa'īd ibn Ja'far that Ibn 'Abbās said:

يوم الخميس ومايوم الخميس
قال: اشتدّ برسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله وجعُهُ في ذلكَ اليوم فقالَ: ائتوني بدَواةٍ وَ صَحيفةٍ أكْتُبُ
لَكُمْ كِتاباً لا تَضِلّوا بَعدَهُ ابداً، فَتنازَعوا ولا يَنْبَغي عِنْدَ النَّبي التَّنازُعُ
فقالوا: ماشأنُهُ، اهَجَرَ؟ اسْتَفْهِموهُ، فَذَهَبوا يُعيدونَ عَلَيْهِ فقال: دَعوني فَالَّذي انا فيه خَيْرٌ مِمّا تَدْعونَني
اليَهِ الحديث.

Thursday! Who knows what that Thursday is! The condition of the Prophet (s) worsened and he said: "Bring me an inkpot and a piece of paper to write you a letter so that you will (live in peace and) not go astray later on." Although it was forbidden to quarrel in front of the Prophet, they did so, and said: "How is his condition? Ask him if he is talking in delirium!"

They went closer to the Messenger and asked him once more what he wanted, and he said: "Leave me on my own; whatever condition I am in now is better than what you are comparing me with."

And by means of another document it is narrated from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh Anṣāri, who said:

لَمّا كانَ فى مَرَضِ رَسولِ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله الذى تَوَفّى فيهِ، دَعا بِصَحيفَةٍ لِيَكْتُبَ فيها لِاُمَّتِهِ كِتاباً لا يَضِلُّونَ وَلا يَضَلُّونَ،

قال: فَكانَ فى الْبَيْتِ لَغَطٌ وَكَلامٌ وَتَكَلَّمَ عُمَرُ بنِ الْخَطّابِ قال: فَرَفَضَهُ النَّبِيُّ.

On his deathbed, the Prophet (s) asked for a sheet of paper on which to write something for his nation to secure them from going astray.

Jābir added: Because of the Messenger's (s) request, a row broke out in his room. Then 'Umar ibn Khattāb began to speak and the Prophet (s) stopped him.

And in a separate paper, it is narrated from 'Umar ibn Khattāb:

قالَ: كُنّا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ وَبَيْنَنا وَبَيْنَ النِّساءِ حِجابٌ، فَقالَ رَسولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله: اغْسِلونى بِسَبْعِ قِرَبٍ، وَأْتونى بِصَحيفَةٍ وَدَواةٍ، اَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ كِتاباً لَنْ تَضِلّوا بَعْدَهُ اَبَداً فَقالَ النِّسْوَةُ: ائْتوا رَسولَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله بِحاجَتِهِ.

قال عمر: فَقُلْتُ: اُسْكُتْنَ فَأَنْتُنَّ صَواحِبُهُ، اذا مَرِضَ عَصَرْتُنَّ أَعْيُنَكُنَّ وَاذا صَحَّ اَخَذْتُنَّ بِعُنُقِهِ فَقالَ: رَسولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله: هُنَّ خَيْرٌ مِنْكُمْ.

We were in the presence of the Prophet (s), and there was a screen hung between the ladies and us. The Prophet (s) said: "When I die, perform the ceremonial ablutions with seven water-skins of water. And now, bring me a piece of paper and an inkpot to write a letter for you, so that you do not go astray after my death."

The women said: Bring the Messenger whatever he has demanded.

Then I said: "O women, keep quiet! You are his wives, and whenever he is ill you keep crying, and when he feels well you embrace him."

Then the Prophet (s) said: "These women know better than you."

And through another chain it is narrated that Ibn 'Abbās said:

قال: لما حضرت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله الْوَفاةُ، وَفِى الْبَيْتِ رِجالٌ فيهِمْ عمر بن الخطاب فَقالَ رَسولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله: هَلُمَّ اَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ كِتاباً لَنْ تَضِلّوا بَعْدَهُ

قَالَ عمر: انَّ رَسولَ اللهِ قَدْ غَلَبَهُ الْوَجَعُ، وَعِنْدَكُمُ الْقُرآنُ حَسْبُنَا كِتابُ اللهِ، فَاخْتَلَفَ اهْلُ الْبَيتِ وَ اخْتَصَموا، فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقولُ: قَرِّبوا يَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ رَسولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يقولُ: ما قالَ عُمَرُ،

.فَلَمّا كَثُرَ اللَّغَطُ وَالْاِخْتِلافُ وَغَمّوا رَسولَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه و آله

قالَ: قُوموا عَنّي، قالَ عُبَيْدُاللهِ بْنِ عَبْدِاللهِ فَكانَ ابْنُ عباس يقولُ: اَلرَّزِيَّةُ كُلُّ الرَّزِيَّةِ ما حالَ بَيْنَ رَسولِ الله صلى الله عليه و آله وَبَيْنَ انْ يَكْتُبَ لَهُمْ ذلِكَ الْكِتابَ مِنْ اخْتِلافِهِمْ وَلَغَطِهِمْ.

When death approached the Prophet (s), a group of people including 'Umar were present in his room, and the Prophet (s) said: "Come closer to me, for I am to write something for you so that after me you will not to be in difficulty."

'Umar said: "The Prophet (s) was in pain; it weakened him so much that he was speaking spontaneously and saying, 'God's Book is enough for us.'"

A dispute erupted among the Household, and they began quarrelling, and some of them said: "Bring the Prophet (s) whatever he wants in order to write for you whatever he wills." But some of them backed 'Umar, and they said whatever 'Umar had said.

When the dispute increased and they raised their voices, it made the Prophet (s) upset, and in his great sorrow he said: "Keep away from me, and leave me!"[213]

'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās says:

My father 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās said: "It was a disaster! The tragedy was that they obstructed the Prophet (s) and his writing, and did not give him the opportunity to write what he wanted. By disagreeing and making much noise at the session, they prevented him from fulfilling this important affair."

List of Publications of 'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusayni Ṭihrānī

Theology

(1) *Khodā Shināsī* (*Knowing Allah*), 3 volumes

The main discussions in the series are on the verse الله نور السموات والارض up to والله بكل شيء عليم and some discussions have been published in this field about the Creator's Unity, the attributes and essence of the Names, the quality of creation, the relationship of events to their causes, the manifestation of the Light, guardianship and the connection of creatures to God, and seeing God and reaching His Essence.

Some topics in this series are: *God Can Be Seen; God Loves Whatever Is Other Than God, And Whatever Is Other Than God Loves Him; The Possibility of the Sincere Believers' Seeing God; God Is Everywhere, So Open Your Eyes and See Him; The Deniers of the Vision Of God Are the Worst of People; The Different Ways of Knowing God: Not Seeing Him Is Neither Right Nor Possible; The Logic of the Qur'an Specifies Everything to Be Restricted to God; The Connotation of the Personification in* لا هو الّا هو *Considers Everyone, Apart from the Gnostics, the Same; Those Who Believe in Anything Disconnected with God in Some Way or Another Do Not Believe in Him;* Hashwiyya, Shaykhiyya, *or* Qishriyya *Have No Advantage from God, As Well the Deviations Of Shaykh Ahmad and His Followers.*

(2) *Imam Shināsī* (*Knowing the Imams*), 18 volumes

This is a good collection of commentary discussions, philosophy, *hadith*, history, and sociology concerning the Imamate and the Guardianship of Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib and the Infallible Imams, consisting of lessons based on reasoning, technically based on the Holy Qur'an and *hadith* from the Sunnis and Shi'a, with a critical discussion on successorship.

This collection consists of 270 lessons, on topics such as infallibility, the genetics of Guardianship, the necessity of obeying the most learned, the necessity of the infallible living Imam for society, the meaning of guardianship, the mystery and verity of knowledge, the judgments of Ali, the Imam's companionship with the Qur'an in all aspects, Shi'ism and the attributes of the Shi'a, the priority of the Shi'a in all knowledge, published books by the Shi'a, a discussion of *al-Sahifah al-Sajjādiyyah*, the process of knowledge and the history of the Shi'a from the beginning of Islam, the great and everlasting school, the highest level of the school of Imam al-

Sādiq, rejecting the basis, opinions, and beliefs of the different Sunni sects, worldly knowledge and the Islamic knowledge of Imam al-Sādiq, the uprising of Muā'wiyah to overthrow the signs of prophethood and change it to a kingdom, and other topics in detail.

(3) *Ma'ād Shināsī* (*Eschatology*), 10 volumes

This collection includes 75 lessons about the quality and course of man's life in this world, the way he changes and becomes proud in the world of facts, and his death and journey to God. There are discussions on topics such as the present life and the inter-worlds, and how the souls have communication with this world, the quality of the creation of the angels and their duties, how the trumpet is blown and all the dead revive at once, and all gather in the presence of God, the world of Resurrection, accounts, questioning and the Path, intercession, the Height, Paradise and Hell. This is all illustrated by verses of the Qur'an, *hadith* of the Infallible Imams, reasoning, and philosophy.

Morality, Philosophy and Mysticism

(1) *Risāla-yi Sayr wa Sulūk; Mansūb bi Baḥr al-'Ulūm (A Thesis on the Spiritual Journey Related to Baḥr al-'Ulūm)*

An explanation of the journey towards God and its signs and effects, together with a detailed explanation of the topics of the thesis, and an introduction by the revered writer on the biography of Allāmah Baḥr al-'Ulūm and his thesis.

This treatise has been translated into English under the title *Treatise on Spiritual Journeying and Wayfaring* by Tawus Raja, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Great Books of the Islamic World, 2013).

(2) *Risāla-yi Lubb al-Lubāb dar Sayr wa Sulūk-i Ulu'l Albab (Treatise on the Kernel of the Kernel concerning the spiritual journey of the man possessed of mind)*

The moral and gnostic prerequisites described by the venerable Allāmah Tabātabā'i concerning the complete manner of how to reach to God; an explanation of the prior condition of sincerity, a brief explanatory discussion on the different ways to journey towards God; the necessary conditions for attaining gnosis and different ways of rejecting past attachments.

This Treatise has been translated into English under the title *Kernel of the Kernel* by Mohammad H. Faghfoory, foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (SUNY Press, 2003).

(3) *Tawhid 'Ilmi wa 'Ayni (Mystical and Scientific Unity)*

The hierarchy and chains of gnosis and injunctions discussed by the great scholars Hājj Sayyid Ahmad Karbalā'i and Hājj Shaykh Muhammad Ḥusayn Isfahani, concerning acouplet from Attar Nishābūri where they interpreted the gnostic and injunction couplet to suit their tastes.

Because these schools require careful reasoning, gnosis, and monotheistic attention, the venerable Allāmah Tabātabā'i, besides teaching in the theological schools in Qum, has written six other books on *Tazyilāt* and *Muḥakamāt* in addition to the first three written by the late Shaykh. He has written eight *Tazyil* in addition to four other written ones. In the final part of the book, he has added an introduction to the characteristics of the four schools and the learned teachers.

(4) *Mihr-e Tābān (The Shining Sun)*

This book is on the reminiscences of Allāmah Ayatulllah Sayyid Mohammad Ḥusayn Tabātabā'i Tabrizi and his discussions with his students. At the beginning of the book, Allāmah Ayatullah has referred to his biography, and then his scientific, philosophical, and gnostic method and that of some of the greatest men. In the second part, there are some of his discussions with Allāmah on the Holy Qur'an, philosophy, gnosis, and moral, scientific, and historical events.

This book has been translated under the title *Shining Sun: In Memory of 'Allamah Tabataba'i* by Tawus Raja (ICAS Press, 2011).

(5) *Rūḥ-e Mujarrad (The Detached Spirit)*

This is about the reminiscence of the great religious gnostic Hājj Sayyid Ḥāshim Musavi Ḥaddād, who was of great prominence and had exemplary ethical values, knowing God and fulfilling His Commands; may the great knowledge of Ayatullah Hājj Sayyid Ali Qāḍi Tabātabā'i Tabrizi benefit the Muslims.

In this book it is mentioned how the revered Allāmah was honored to go to the presence of the most revered Ḥaddād, and also his quality of living, his way of studying, the conditions of his religion, the conditions of his students, an explanation of his journey, his careful discussions on Monotheism, the manner of reaching God, the necessity of obeying the master teachers, defending the gnostics and the learned, a rejection of the

accusations against Muhyi al-Dīn [al-Arabi], and the meaning of the unity of being are all discussed here.

Qur'anic Commentary

(1) *The New Thesis on the Commentary of the Verse* الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

Men are in charge (are the protectors and maintainers) of women... (4:34)

This is a collection of commentaries on *hadith*, jurisprudence, science, social affairs, reasoning, *jihad*, judgment, the status of women, the philosophy of the rights of men and women and the meaning of their equal rights, women and *jihad*, social positions, and a discussion on the guardianship and jurisdiction.

The origin of his thesis is in Arabic, but because of some doubtful but important questions related to women, we have translated it into Farsi.

(2) *The Modern Discussions*

This contains commentaries on *hadith*, jurisprudence, and historical discussions on the foundations of Islam based on the lunar months and years, referring to verse إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللهِ and the sermon of the Prophet at Minā, as well as commentary on the verse نسيء

Other discussions include the unlawfulness of altering the lunar months to solar months, the direct interference of outsiders in changing Islamic history through the colonization of the national parliament in three stages, the overthrowing of the Pahlavi Dynasty for their abrogation of the religious history of Mohammad, and the benefits of the lunar year and the harmfulness of the solar.

Discussions on Science and Jurisprudence.

(1) *A Theory on the Witnessing of the Crescent Moon*

This is a practical discussion with communications and scientific and jurisprudent letters concerning the necessity for the people to know well the paradigms for witnessing the crescent moon to confirm the lunar months.

(2) *The Muslim's Duty in Vitalizing the Islamic Government*

This contains the opinion of the writer concerning the organization of the Islamic Government, and the prior

preparation for it, plus an explanation of the historical events and the writer's activities in the process of the Revolution.

(3) *Guardianship of Jurisdiction in the Islamic Government* (4 volumes)
A composition by the Allāmah Ayatullah in 48 lessons concerning the Infallible Imams, the just and qualified jurisprudent, and the people's duties according to verses of the Qur'an and the *hadith*, and a clear and detailed explanation of jurisprudence, science, history and social events.

(4) *The Spiritual Light of the Qur'an* (4 volumes)
In this collection, the first part deals with the course of Spiritual Light (including the spiritual light of the Qur'an, the mosque, prayer, fasting, and supplications); a discussion on the guidance of the Qur'an as being the best way; the everlasting wholesomeness of the Qur'an; how all commands of the Qur'an are practical at all times; a rejection of the idea of the limitation of birth; an investigation of some misunderstandings about the Qur'an; and the difficulties created by the discourse on "the expansion and contraction of the theories of the religion." Also, discussions on the book of *Knowledge and Values*, the book of *The Creation of Man*, *The Perfection of the Qur'an*, and *The Road Passed By*.

Other topics in this collection are the logic of the Qur'an a based on Monotheism; statements in the Qur'an concernir errors in the Torah and the Bible; commands in the Qur'an abo *jihad*, killing, slavery, and ransoms; the penetration of th Qur'anic verses into souls and the world; clearly defined and unambiguous verses; and how to recite the Qur'an when praying and at other times.

Topics also include the effect of the Qur'an on the perfect man; the ethics of the Qur'an; the explanation of the creation of man and the stars in the Qur'an; the verses inviting men to Monotheism and virtue; the miracles of the Qur'an and its having been revealed in Arabic; the necessity for all Muslims to speak Arabic and doing away with ancient Farsi; the greatness and authenticity of the Holy Qur'an; and the effect of the Qur'an in Islamic society.

Topics also include the supremacy of Islamic science over that of Greece, the quality of writing and publishing of the Qur'an, the story of the modern Torah and Bible, the certainty

and vastness of the Qur'an, the unchangeability of the Qur'an, and conditions for its publication and compilation.

(5) ***An Observation on the Expansion and Contraction of Islamic Theory Based on an Article of Doctor 'Abdul Karim Sorūsh***

In this book the Allāmah Ayatullah explains serious mistakes in the theory, and has answered in the best way concerning the eternal nature of the Qur'an and certain facts about the universe.

This book forms the main part of the second volume of *The Spiritual Light of the Qur'an*, and because of the importance of the subject and the demand of some scholars to make it simple so as to be useful for teachers and students, whereas there is a separate publication for people of knowledge and those who search for the truth.

Topics in the book include the nobility and eternal nature of the Divine religion and the limitation of man's understanding; the greatness and supremacy of Islamic knowledge over modern knowledge; basic teachings of the religious schools that are based on the Qur'an and gnosis; the rejection of the so-called enlightened group of Islamic theory because of alien culture; Allāmah Tabātabā'i's reasoning in support of natural causes as opposed to abstract causes; the logic of the Qur'an as based on proof and reasoning and not illusion.

(6) A booklet on ***Marriage: The Decrease of Population as a Great Loss for Muslim Society***

This book is based on a part of the first volume of *Nūr Malakūt al-Qur'an* on marriage in Islam, the importance of begetting children, and the worth of a Muslim. It refers to a translation of the verse و لا يقتلن اولادهن, and because of the importance of the subject, it has been extracted and published separately.

While the book was being published, five years had already passed since the demise of the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and in that length of time many events had taken place to decrease the nation of Iran and destroy the Shi'a. The Ayatullah Allāmah, by referring to the Qur'an, wrote some thirteen appendices to this booklet. He took into consideration the question of controlling the increase of the population within

Islamic society, and with clear-sightedness he revealed the deceitful political plan of the oppressors.

Some titles of the appendices are: the dreadful attack and arrogance of the world after the demise of the Great Leader of the Revolution; the failure to refer to the verdicts of the jurisprudents, even to those of the Ayatullah Khomeini, may God be pleased with him; the opinion of the Ayatullah Khāmene'i on the decrease of the population; statistics on the decrease through birth control; the inviolability of birth control and the payment of full blood money instead; opposition to Islamic philosophy and the spirit of belief through the activities of the population.

(7) A letter of critique and the amendment of the draft of the Basic Rules

This is a letter to the Great Leader of the Revolution, may God be pleased with him, containing a critique and the amendment of the draft of the Basic Rules based on Islamic law, and the main plan of the sanctity of the jurisprudent.

Historical Discussions

(1) ***The Glimmers of Ḥusayn***

A booklet of some sayings, preaching, and sermons of the most holy Master of the Martyrs, translated with essential documents from reliable sources.

(2) ***The Gift of Ghadīr*****: the two black and white letters**

This book includes a letter from the Emir of Bokhara and the response from the Emir of Khorasan concerning the immediate Guardianship and caliphate of Ali from two centuries ago. By adding an introduction and scrutinization by His Holiness Allāmah, it was prepared for publication.

Biography of the author

The Muslim Shi'a Scholar and Thinker

'Allāmah Hājj Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī

From the introduction to Kernel of the Kernels

According to available biographical information, 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1345 A.H./1925 (1303 S.H.) and passed away in Mashhad, Iran, in 1416 A.H./1995 (1374 S.H.).

Family

His grandfather, Ayatullah Hājj Sayyid Ibrāhīm, had studied in Najaf with Ayatullah Mīrzā Hasan Shīrāzī (d. 1312/1894, a scholar known as *mīrzā-yi awwal*). The 'Allāmah's father, Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Ṣādiq, was a student of Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī Shīrāzī (d. 1339/1920, known as *mīrzā-yi duwwum*). After completing his education in Samarra, Muhammad Ṣādiq returned to Iran and settled in Tehran. Little is written about Muhammad Ṣādiq's life and career during the reign of Riḍā Shah (1925–1941). There is much evidence, however, that points to his active involvement in open oppositional activity against Riḍā Shah's government. Several observers, including 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī himself, testify that like many other members of the clergy, Ayotullah Muhammad Ṣādiq strongly opposed secularization and westernization of Iran. He was particularly active in organizing and leading the government's opponents in Tehran against the law for uniformity of dress introduced in December, 1921 (1307 S.H.), and the law for the abolition of women's veils promulgated in 1935 (1314 S.H.). As a result of these activities, Muhammad Ṣādiq was arrested and imprisoned several times. Despite the government's attempt to discredit him, he survived and remained one of the most senior and respected *mujtahids* of Tehran in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century.[214]

Ayatullah 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī is related to many prominent Shi'a Iranian scholars of previous centuries by birth and/or marriage, including such notable scholars as Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Ayatullah Mīrzā Muhammad Ṭihrānī, the author of *Mustadrak al-Biḥār*, Muhammad Ṣāliḥ Khatunābādi, and Sayyid Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm.

Education

Unlike his father, the young Muhammad Ḥusayn did not receive his early religious education in the theological schools of Qum or Tehran. He studied with his father at home until he became well

versed in the Islamic sciences. He also received a modern education during the 1930's and 1940's in Tehran. After completing elementary school and three years of secondary school he entered the German Technical School in Tehran, and in 1942, graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering.

It was only then in 1943 (1364 A.H./1322 S.H.) that Muhammad Ḥusayn entered the Ḥawzah 'Ilmiyyah of Qum and joined 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's[215] circle of students. For the next seven years, the young Muhammad Husayn studied in Qum, receiving instruction from Shaykh Murtaḍā Ḥā'irī Yazdī and Sayyid Muhammad Dāmād in addition to 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭaba'ī. After seven years of studying with the 'Allāmah, Ṭihrānī reached the rank of *mujtahid* and decided to go to Najaf to continue his education.

Ṭihrānī stayed in Najaf for seven years, during which time he studied with Ayatullahs Āqā Buzurg Ṭihrānī, Sayyid Maḥmūd Shāhrūdī Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khū'ī, Shaykh Ḥusayn Ḥillī, and several other scholars.[216]

The Scholars

Several scholars and mystics played important roles in 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī's spiritual life. As Ṭihrānī himself has stated, his first teacher and spiritual guide was 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who initiated Ṭihrānī into mysticism (*'irfān*), took him under his spiritual guidance, and closely supervised his wayfaring and spiritual advancement while he was studying in Qum. Until the end of his life, Ṭihrānī constantly admired Ṭabāṭabā'ī and acknowledged his role in his intellectual and spiritual achievements. Thus, when Ṭihrānī left Qum for Najaf, he had already started wayfaring and pursuing an active spiritual life.

During the years in Najaf, as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī had instructed him, Ṭihrānī was to seek guidance in spiritual matters only from Ayatullah 'Abbās Qūchānī and whomever he deemed appropriate. Ayatullah Qūchānī taught Ṭihrānī further details and theoretical principles of the doctrine.

In 1957 (1376 A.H./1336 S.H.) Ṭihrānī met the most eminent spiritual master in Karbala, namely, Hājj Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād (d. 1984), an incident that changed Ṭihrānī's soul and destiny.

'Allāmah Ṭihrānī states that he had heard Hājj Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād's name from 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who always spoke of him with respect and admiration. When he went to Najaf and visited Ayatullah Shaykh 'Abbās Qūchānī, Ṭihrānī inquired about Hājj Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād and found out that he lived in Karbala. A mysterious yearning to meet Sayyid Hāshim finally led Ṭihrānī to

make a pilgrimage to Karbala. In that same year he met the great master. The young Ṭihrānī's soul was totally captured by the spiritual eminence and charisma of Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād.

Ṭihrānī's acquaintance with Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād had a profound impact on his scholarly and spiritual life. From his first meeting with Ḥaddād, the young Ṭihrānī's soul was greatly transformed. In Ḥaddād, Ṭihrānī found a sincere Muslim, and a great spiritual master and guide who had passed from the realm of multiplicity and was so completely annihilated in Divine Unity (*tawḥīd*) that words cannot describe his station and his personality. He was beyond description and comprehension. He was one of the most powerful figures in spiritual journeying who had passed beyond the realm of angels (*malakūt*), had reached the realm of Divine Names (*lāhūt*) and Divine Invincibility (*jabarūt*) and had been totally annihilated in the Divine Essence.[217]

One can hardly exaggerate the impact that Ḥaddād had on Ṭihrānī's spiritual life. In *Rūḥ-i Mujarrad*, Ṭihrānī describes in detail Ḥaddād's spiritual station and the way he trained his disciples in spiritual matters. Suffice it to say that after becoming acquainted with Ḥaddād and until the master's death, Ṭihrānī made considerable advancement on the path, to such an extent that Ḥaddād honored Ṭihrānī by granting him the title of Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifatayn (master of two peoples, i.e. scholars and mystics).

After seven years studying in Najaf and benefiting from Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād's presence and instructions, the master advised him to return to Tehran. Despite his own wishes, Ṭihrānī reluctantly did so and began his career as a teacher, leader of congregational prayer, and orator in the Qā'im Mosque in Tehran. In the meantime, pursuant to Ḥaddad's recommendation, Ṭihrānī received spiritual guidance from Shaykh Muhammad Jawād Anṣārī, another prominent master who lived in the city of Hamadān in western Iran.

For the next twenty-two years, Ṭihrānī visited Najaf and other shrine cities in Iraq regularly and greatly benefited from his association with Hājj Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād.

Works

At the same time, he devoted most of his time and effort to preaching and spreading the principles of traditional Islam as well as teaching and training students who came to him from different parts of the country. In his public sermons, which were very popular, Ṭihrānī dealt with purely religious issues as well as socio-political ones. Some of these speeches were published later in

Tehran or Mashhad. Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Tihrānī was a traditional scholar in the true sense of the word, and highly respected in scholarly and religious circles in Tehran, Qum, and Mashhad. Like his teacher and mentor, 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Ṭihrānī can be considered a student of the school of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī, while at the same time being greatly influenced and inspired by the ideas and writings of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirḥī (Mullā Ṣadrā). He admired and respected Iranian philosophers of previous centuries, particularly such thinkers as Abu Rayḥān Bīrūnī, Ibn Sīnā, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī.

Frequently in his writings, Ṭihrānī referred to these thinkers and philosophers. In addition, he used verses from the Qur'an extensively.

Like 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī he uses the same technique of commenting on and interpreting each verse with the help of other verses. As Ṭihrānī states, this approach is based on certain prophetic *hadith* and narrations (*riwāyāt*) from the Shi'a Imams as well as on *Nahj al-Balāghah* of Imam Ali Ibn Abī Ṭālib: "Verily, some verses of the Qur'an interpret and comment on others." "God's Book is the one by which you can see the Truth, say the Truth, and hear the Truth. Some of its verses interpret other verses, some are an attestation for and reason for others. The Qur'an contains no contradictions in the affairs of God and does not separate from God whoever adheres to its injunctions."

Another feature of Ṭihrānī's writings is how he deals with social, political, historical, moral, and philosophical issues, in addition to purely religious and metaphysical ones. In his writings, he addresses many questions facing contemporary Muslim society and provides appropriate Islamic solutions.

Like 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Ayatullah Ṭihrānī devoted his life to scholarship as well as spiritual journeying and wayfaring. He wrote on metaphysics and a variety of Islamic subjects and expanded greatly our scope of understanding on the relationship between Shi'ism and Sufism. His writings are characterized by their lucidity, originality, and depth, and are indicative of his mastery of the Qur'an, Shi'ism, Sufism, and Persian and Arabic literature. His spiritual orientation and his esoteric ideas were particularly influenced by teachings and instructions given to him by Hāshim Ḥaddād as well as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Muhammad Jawād Anṣārī. Like them, he admired Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabastārī, Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Ḥāfiz, and Ibn al-Fāriḍ. His devotion to these Sufi poets and thinkers is well reflected in his writings where he frequently presents relevant examples from

their works. However, he was more outspoken than his teachers in criticizing the opponents of Sufism.

Ayatullah Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī was a teacher, eloquent speaker, and prolific writer. He wrote, edited, and translated numerous works on different aspects of Islam, Shi'ism, Sufism, eschatology, and other related subjects. Like his teacher, Ṭihrānī, by his contributions to Islamic studies and mysticism, earned the honorable title of 'Allāmah within his lifetime. Not only do these writings reflect the depth of his knowledge and mastery of philosophy, jurisprudence, theosophy, Shi'ism, and the Holy Qur'an, they are also indicative of the purity of his heart, faith, sincerity, and genuine yearning for knowledge and truth.

Another Aspect

Another aspect of 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī's life that has not been examined to this day is his interest in politics and his participation in political activity during the two decades that preceded the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The nature and details of Ṭihrānī's political activities before, during, and after the Islamic Revolution are important issues that cannot be dealt with here and must be studied separately. The available information suggests that despite his preoccupation with preaching, teaching, and writing, Ṭihrānī had turned his mosque into an active center of opposition against the Shah's government before the revolution; and a center for mass mobilization and political education after the establishment of the Islamic Republic. In one of his publications, Ṭihrānī reports how he organized certain members of the clergy into small groups and defied the Shah's government and its reforms in the early 1960's, how he urged Ayatullah Ruḥullāh Khomeini to issue declarations against the government and formed networks for their distribution, and how he met or communicated with Ayatullah Khomeini and advised him on taking positions on various occasions. Of particular interest is Ṭihrānī's discussion of the events of 15 Khordād, 1342/5, June, 1963 and his activities in support of Khomeini. When Khomeini was arrested by government forces and the rumors of his upcoming execution spread, Ṭihrānī maintains that he met many prominent scholars of Qum and wrote to others in cities throughout Iran asking them to declare that Khomeini was an Ayatullah and one of the country's religious references (*marāji' al-taqlīd*), and so his execution was not permissible according to the Constitution of 1905. As a result, instead of execution, Ayatullah Khomeini was exiled first to Turkey and then to Iraq. After the victory of the Revolution,

Ṭihrānī states, he met with Ayatullah Khomeini several times and presented the outline of a twenty-point program for consolidation of the new regime, including the establishment of a new military force and suggestions to modify the new constitution.

Despite his interest in politics, before the revolution, Ṭihrānī concentrated most of his time and energy on an extensive cultural campaign for the purification of Islam and Shi'ism from beliefs and practices he considered to be corrupt and non-Islamic. Concomitantly, he devoted himself to teaching, studying, and practicing *'irfan* in a serious but quiet manner. We know that in the late 1960's and the 1970's, when 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī held a class for a select group of his students in Tehran, the young Ṭihrānī, along with the late Ayatullah Murtaḍā Muṭahharī and Professors Henry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, attended those sessions and benefited from 'Allāmah's knowledge and presence. During those sessions, important religious and intellectual questions on Islam in general, and Shi'ism and Sufism in particular, were discussed, and Professor Nasr acted as the main translator and interpreter.[218] After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Ṭihrānī settled in Mashhad where he devoted his time to teaching, writing, and spiritual wayfaring. Many more students and budding mystics gathered around Ṭihrānī, benefited from his scholarship, and received spiritual guidance from him until he passed away on 9 Safar 1416 A.H.

As mentioned before, 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī was initiated into the Divine mysteries while he was still fairly young. In *Lubb al-Lubāb*, 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī discusses the doctrine and the method of the *ṭarīqah* (order) they both followed. In this order equal emphasis is placed on exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islam as well as on love and devotion to the Blessed Prophet's Household (peace and blessing be upon them).

In *Lubb al-Lubāb*, Ṭabāṭabā'ī details these ideas and goes so far as to say that the station of the Universal Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) can be fully attained only by the Imam, the status of the Imam in Shi'ism being identical to that of the Spiritual Pole (*quṭb*) in Sufism, whose existence in the world is always necessary and indispensable.

'Allāmah Ṭihrānī was a man of great piety and noble character. His presence is still strongly felt in the intellectual and spiritual circles in Mashhad several years after his departure from this world. Three years before his death in 1995, and with the support of his students and disciples, the 'Allāmah established in Mashhad the Foundation for the Translation and Publication of the Collection on Islamic Sciences and Culture (*Mu'assasayi Tarjumah wa Nashr-i*

Dawra-yi 'Ulūm wa Ma'ārif-i Islām). He appointed some of his trusted students to manage and supervise the publication of his writings and the translation of some of those works into other languages. Most of the 'Allāmah's writings had been published by Ḥikmat Publication Company within his lifetime. When he passed away, the Foundation took over this arduous task. To this date, the Foundation has published most of his writings in Persian. Many of his works have also been translated into Arabic and published by Dār al-Maḥajjat al-Bayḍā' in Beirut, Lebanon. *Lubb al-Lubāb* was the first in the series to be translated in its entirety into English.

Synopses of Some of His Books

Allah Shenāsī is a collection of speeches that the Ayatullah gave in Mashhad. It starts with a commentary on verses thirty-five to sixty-four of chapter twenty-four of the Qur'an (Sūrat al-Nūr). In this collection, he discusses some of the most profound metaphysical issues, such as the Unity (*tawḥīd*) of the Divine Names, Attributes, and Essence, the descent of Divine Light in the manifestations of existence (*wujūd*), the reality of *walāyah*, the question of unity with the Divine, the meaning of *lā huwa illā huwa* (there is no he but He), and other related issues.

Imam Shenāsī is an encyclopedic work in eighteen volumes based on the Qur'an and the *hadith* that addresses the question of the Imamate from historical, social, philosophical, and esoteric points of view, and the imamate of Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib in particular. Important and often controversial issues such as the necessity of the presence of an infallible and living Imam, prophetic traditions concerning the question of *walāyah*, the Ghadīr Khumm incident and the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage (*ḥajjat al-widā*), the development of Shi'a sciences and the role of Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him), and other issues of similar nature are discussed in this collection.

Ma'ād Shenāsī is another comprehensive work in ten volumes dealing with eschatology from the point of view of the Shi'a in this collection, 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī deals with such issues as the intermediate world (*'ālam al-barzakh*), the creation of angels and their duties, life after death, and finally, resurrection and the Day of Judgment. Like his other works, this collection is also predominantly based on the Holy Qur'an, *hadith*, and *riwāyāt* from the Shi'a Imams.

Other important books written by Ayatullah Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī that have been published by the Foundation include the following:

1. *Hadiyyah Ghadīriyyah* (*The Ghadīriyyah Present*)
2. *Lum'āt al-Ḥusayn* (*Divine Flashes of [Imam] Ḥusayn*)

3. *Lubb al-Lubāb dar Sayr wa Sulūk-i Ulū al-Albāb* (*Kernel of the Kernel Concerning the Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey of the People of Intellect*)
4. *Mihr-i Tābān* (*Shining Sun: A Biography of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī*)
5. *Nami-yi Pish Niwis-i Qānūn-i Asāsī* (*Introduction to the First Draft of the Constitution [of Iran]*)
6. *Nigarishi bar Maqāla-yi Basṭ wa Qabḍ-i Tu'ūrik-i Shari'at* (*An Examination of the Essay by Dr. 'Abdulkarim Surush on the Theoretical Expansion and Contraction in the Sharia*)
7. *Nūr Malakūt al-Qur'an* (*The Angelic Light of the Qur'an*) (in 4 volumes)
8. *Risālah-yi Badī'ah* (*The Original Treatise*)
9. *Risālah Ḥawl-i Mas'ala-yi Ru'yat-i Hilāl* (*Treatise on Seeing the Moon*)
10. *Risālah-yi Nikāḥiyyah* (*Treatise on Marriage*)
11. *Risālah-yi Nuwin* (*The New Treatise*)
12. *Risālah-yi Sayr wa Sulūk* (*Treatise on Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey Attributed to Sayyid Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm* [edited with an introduction and comments]
13. *Rūḥ-i Mujarrad* (*The Detached Spirit*)
14. *Tawhid-i 'Ilmi wa 'Ayni* (*Unity of Knowledge and Essence*)
15. *Walāyat-i Faqih dar Ḥukūmat-i Islam* (*The Guardianship of the Jurist in the Islamic Government*)
16. *Waẓīfa-yi Fard-i Musulmān dar Iḥyā'-i Ḥukūmat-i Islām* (*The Duty of Individual Muslims in Reviving Islamic Government*)

Sections of *Lubb al-Lubāb*, as well as selected parts of *Rūḥ-i Mujarrad*, were previously rendered into English by Mr. Ali Quli Qarai and appeared in *Tawḥīd*, a quarterly journal that was once published in the city of Qum, though its publication has ceased for some time....[219]

ENDNOTES

[1] Shaykh Ya'qūb al-Kulayni, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, edition 4 (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1407 AH), vol. 1, p. 169.

[2] Hishām ibn Ḥakam was born in Kūfa and brought up in Wasit, and his business was in Baghdad. Imam Ṣādiq, Imam Kāzim, and the Imam Riḍā have praised him with honor and a good reputation. He was a narrator and the holder of one of the 100 original Shi'i *hadith* collections. He was an authorized *hadith* narrator and an expert orator in the field of theology. He had a great reputation for discussion in his youth. al-Rijal Mirza Muhammad Ali Ardabili also mentions this *hadith* in M. Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Beirut: Mu'asissat al-Wafā, 1404 AH), vol. 7, p. 3; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn*, Cf *Biḥār al-Anwār*; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Ilal al-Sharāye* (Qum: Dāvari, 1386 AH); Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Amāli*, edition 4 (n. p, Intishārāt Kitabkhāneh Islam, 1362 HS).

[3] Abā Marwān is the nickname for Amr ibn Ubayd.

[4] Ṣadūq has also related this *hadith* in Amāli, p. 351, by Sa'd ibn 'Abdullāh, quoting from Ibrahim ibn Hāshim, he too quoting Ismā'il ibn Murād, from Yūnis ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān quoting Yūnis ibn Ya'qūb, who has said: "There were a few people in the presence of the Venerable One, and Ḥamrān ibn A'yun, Mu'min al-Ṭāq, Hishām ibn Salim and al-Ṭayyār were among them. And there were also some others, and Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam was with them." He then goes on to explain the whole *hadith*.

[5] Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭi, *Khasā'is al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1405 AH), vol. 2, p. 124, quoted in *The Shiite in Islam*, Shaykh Sebt Musā, part two (Khāneyeh Ali Press, 1949), p. 124.

[6] Amāli, p. 77, *Ilal al-Sharāye'*, p. 228, and *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 10, p. 224, all of which relate the *hadith* from Ṣadūq.

[7] For more about this verse, see Sayyed Hāshim Baḥrāni, *Ghāyat-al-Marām*, (manuscript, n.p., n.d)., section nine, p. 219.

[8] Sulaymān ibn Ibrahim Qundūzī Hanafi, *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah* (Kāzimiyyah: Dār al-Kutubal-Islāmiyyah, n.d.), p. 252

[9] Ahmad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Muhammad Ṭabari, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.).

[10] *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah, p.* 164.

[11] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, cited from *Mawaddah al-Qurbā*, p. 256.

[12] According to Shi'a creeds, *al-'Ālam al-Dhar* is the realm in which all the people, the progeny of Adam, were made manifest to him, and the oath of the Unity and Lordship of Allah was taken from them.

[13] Ali ibn Ḥusayn Mas'ūdi, *Murūj al-Dhihab*, edition 2, (Qum: Dār al-Hujrah, 1409 AH), vol. I, pp. 32–33.

[14] *Murūj al-Dhihab*, vol. I, p. 37.

[15] Ali ibn Ḥisām al-Dīn Muttaqī Hindi, *Kanz al-'Ummāl* (Beirut: Mu'assisat al-Risalah, 1409 AH), vol. 12, *hadith* no. 1130, 201; Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal relates this *hadith* from the *hadith* of Zayd ibn Thābit in two correct ways, first on p. 182, and then in the last part of page 189. In the fifth part of his book of *hadith*, however, the expression is:

قال النبی انی تارك فیكم الثقلین كتاب الله واهل بیتی وانهما لن یفترقا حتی یردا علی الحوض

and in the interpretation of *Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 6, p. 7, he says:

واخرج الترمذی وحسن ابن الانباری فی المصاحف عن زید بن ارقم رضی الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلی الله علیه وآله: انی تارك فیكم ما ان تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدی احدهما اعظم من الاخر كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء الی الارض وعترتی اهل بیتی ولن یفترقا حتی یردا علیّ الحوض فانظروا كیف تخلفونی فیهما.

[16] *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 12, *hadith* nos. 1130, p. 201.

[17] Ibid., *hadith* nos. 1152, p. 203.

[18] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 252.

[19] Ibid.

[20] It is not unlikely that in both *hadith* there is فی العدل although one is slightly different.

[21] *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah*, vol. 3, p. 153.

[22] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 235.

[23] Muhammad ibn Ismā'il Bukhāri, *Sahih Bukhāri* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1401 AH), p. 164.

[24] Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythami, *al-Ṣawāiq al-Muhriqa*, (Lebanon: Mu'assisat al-Risālah, 1417 AH), p. 75.

[25] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 235.

[26] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 235.

[27] *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 27.

[28] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, pp. 53-54.

[29] *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah*, vol. 3, pp. 164-165.

[30] Mirzā Najm al-Dīn Sharī Askari, *'Alī wa al-Waṣiyyah*, (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā', 1398 AH), pp. 352–354: the Prophet stood up against those who complained to him about Ali, and whilst defending him he warned them that Ali was the Successor and Guardian of every believer.

[31] *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 36.

[32] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 45, p. 191.

[33] Sayyed ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl*, (Qum: Daftar Tabliqāt, 1376 HS), p. 712.

[34] Here the question arises whether the meaning of "consent" (*irtiḍā*) is absolute consent, but in verse 28 of Surat al-Anbiyā'

ولا يشفعون الا لمن ارتضى

the meaning of consent refers only to faith and religion. The answer is that as the intercession is for the sins, especially the greater sins (*ma'ṣiyat al-kabirah*), according to verse 32 of Surat al-Najm:

ليجزى الذين اساءوا بما عملوا ويجزى الذين احسنوا بالحسنى، الذين يجتنبون كبائر الإثم والفواحش الا اللمم

The verse has singled out those who abstain from greater sins as "those who do good," and the Prophet has stated that intercession is not for them:

شفاعتي لاهل الكبائر من امتي فاما المحسنون فما عليهم من سبيل

and in verse 30 of Surat al-Nisā':

ان تجتنبوا كبائر ما تنهون عنه نكفر عنكم سيئاتكم

Therefore, abstention from greater sins by itself would remove minor sins. On this basis, the purpose of consent in the verse of intercession must be consent in faith and religion, but not in action, because when one's nature and existence is created at the consent of God, then intercession has nothing to do with actions. A *hadith* from His Holiness Imam Riḍā that interprets "consent" as "consent in the religion" would concur with our interpretation (M. Hussein, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Qum: Daftar Intishārāt Islami, 1429 AH), vol. 1, p. 171) and vol. 7, the Surat al-Anbiyā': 28).

[35] See Khenyazi, *Abū Ṭālib Mu'min Quraysh* (*Abū Ṭālib: The faithful of the Quraysh*) (Qum: Dār al-Ghadīr, 1429 AH); Fakhkhār ibn Sa'd ibn Fakhkhār Mūsavi Hā'iri, *al-Hujjat ala al-Dhāhib ila Takfir Abī Ṭālib*, (Qum: Dār Sayyed al-Shuhadā, 1410 AH), quoted from Ibn Idris Ḥilli and Muhaqiq Ḥilli. In this book he also refers to *Abū Ṭālib Ḥām al-Rasūl wa Nāsirih* by Allama Najm al-Dīn Sharī Askari (Najaf: Matba'atat Adab, 1380 AH).

[36] Ibn Juzi, *Tadhkirah al-Khawās*, edition 1 (Qum: Manshūrāt al-Sharī al-Rāzī, 1418 AH), p. 6.

[37] Ibn Ṣabbāgh, *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah* (Tehran: Manshūrāt al-'Alami, n.d.), p. 13.

[38] Ibn Athir, under the statement of Ibn Ṣabbāgh, vol. 5, p. 517, narrated from *Usd al-Ghābah*.

[39] *Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ*, p. 6.

[40] *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, related from Ḍiyā al-Dīn Abū al-Mu'ayyid Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad Khārazmī in *al-Manāqib* (Qum: Mu'assisat Nashr Islami, 1411 AH).

[41] Ismā'il ibn Muhammad Ḥimyari, *Poems Collection*, p. 155, narrated from Sayyed Muhammad Amin, *A'yān al-Shi'a* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'aruf li al-Matbu'at, 1406 AH), vol. 12, p, 240, *al-Manāqib* , vol. 2, p, 175; and Muhammad Ḥasan Muzaffar Najafi, *Dalā'il al-Ṣidq*, edition 1 (Qum: Mu'assisat Āl al-Bayt, 1422 AH), vol. 2, p. 328.

[42] Ismā'il ibn Muhammad Ḥimyari, *Poems Collection*, p, 155, narrated from Sayyed Muhammad Amin, *A'yān al-Shi'a*, pp. 12, 240, *al-Manāqib*, vol. 2, p. 175; and Muhammad Ḥasan Muzaffar Najafi, *Dalā'il al-Ṣidq*, edition 1, (Qum: Mu'assisat Al al-Bayt, 1422 AH), vol. 2, p. 328.

[43] Āyatullah Hājj Sayyid Muhammad Ali Qāḍi in annotation on the book *Jannat al-Ma'wā* by Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' (p. 122) says: "'Abdul Bāqi ibn Sulaymān ibn Ahmad al-'Umari al-Fārūqi was a great poet and historian who was born to a cultured family in 1204 AH in Musil. He later moved to Baghdad and stayed there until his death in 1278 AH. He wrote many poetical elegies praising the Household and especially Ali." In some recent copies it states: "Within the House of the Ka'ba he was born." In the section *Sarh al-Kharidat al-Ghaybiyyah fi Sharh al-Qaṣidat al-'Ayniyyah* of *Tafsir al-Kabir*, Shihāb al-Dīn Ālūsi writes: "The birth of Ali (as) in the House of God is well known all over the world, and is mentioned in both Shi'a and Sunni books." And further on he says: "No one has ever had such a birth as Ali (as), though not even a word has been said about his birth within the Ka'ba." Just how great is the place of the birth of the Imam of the Imams is shown by its being the direction of prayer for the faithful! "Glory to Him who assigns everything its place, and He is the Judge of the judges." The reference is to page 15 of the same book, *'Alām Zirikli* (vol. 3, p. 474); and *Rayhānat al-Adab* (vol. 3, p. 76).

[44] Ḥimyari, *Collected Poems*, p. 155.

[45] In *Jannat al-Ma'wā* (pp. 121–124), Ayatullah Hājj Shaykh Muhammad Ḥusayn Āl Kāshif al-Ghitā' in his speech about Imam Ali in the Huseiniyyah [a place of religious celebration]) of Bāb al-Sayf in Baghdad said: "In such a short time, we are unable to say much concerning Ali (as), let alone give details of his entire life, for who is able to count the stars in the sky and give their positions? Who can estimate the Commander of the Believers' courage, his fluency in speech, his piety, and relate the previous records of him in Islam, which is known only to God? '*If all the trees of the earth were pens, and the sea and along with seven more seas were ink to write, the words of God would not be exhausted.*'(26:27); or '*Say: "If the sea were ink to write the words of God, the sea would dry up before the words were written."*' (18:109) We can only say but a little concerning his birth on that blessed night or about his station. The birth of the Imam (as) is an attribute of his endless

attributes, which was in the Ka'ba according to the *hadith*. If there is said something other than this, it is by those who want to distinguish the real Light with their own hands."

His birth in the Ka'ba is evident and is recorded in many books; the poets of the past and more recently have composed poems about it, the last of whom is the great poet 'Abdul Bāqi, who at the beginning of his poem says: "You are Ali who is high above the heights, who in the center of Mecca and kernel of the House was born."

And this is a station that no others in the world can achieve.

They have mentioned that when the pain of giving birth came to Mary and she prepared to give birth to Jesus, she took refuge in the Sacred House for the birthplace to be sacred. Once there, a call came to her: "O Mary, leave this place, for this is a place of worship, and not a place to give birth to a child."

However, when Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad, felt the pain of giving birth, she was inside the Ka'ba with the door closed, and she was unable to leave until she had given birth to Ali.

There must have been a great secret to this, because God has said: "O Ka'ba, I shall soon purify and keep you clean from all filth, the idols and the devil by this newly born inside you." It was in fact so, because in the Year of the Victory the Prophet entered inside the Ka'ba and saw the idols hanging on the walls, each of the clans of the Arab tribes having their own special idol. Thence the Prophet let Ali climb on his shoulders, and he broke them one by one, throwing them to the floor. While Ali was breaking them, the Prophet was saying: جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا *And say: "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away, for falsehood is ever bound to vanish."* (17:81)

And Shafi'ī has written in one of his poems: "Ali has set steps on any land/ Where God has put His hand." This is because when the Prophet was speaking about the Ascension, he said: "God, Glory be to Him, put His hand on my shoulder and I sensed serenity in my heart."

There is another more precise secret to the birth of Ali inside the Ka'ba, and that is the fact that concentration on the Ka'ba means a concentration of the Light that has been born inside it. To be more accurate, the concentration for us seems to be upon a straightforward stone building—which might be considered a kind of idol worship, may God forbid it—but the fact is that a man, who is created of dust, sees the material building of the Ka'ba. But the soul, which is the spirit in the body, concentrates on the one and only Light within it. Thus, every genus turns to its own kind: light to light and dust to dust.

Ayatullah Qāḍi has put in his annotation:

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِن شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ *And if all the trees on the earth were pens, and the sea (were ink), with seven more seas to replenish it, the Words of Allah could not be exhausted, for Allah is Mighty, Wise.* (31:27)

and:

قُل لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَن تَنفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

Say, "Though the sea became ink for the Words of my Lord, verily the sea would be used up before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even though we brought the like thereof to help." (18:109)

In *al-Mustadrak* (vol. 3, p. 483), Ḥākim has narrated that: "Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad, gave birth to Ali inside the building of the Ka'ba."

Ahmad ibn 'Abdul al-Rahim Dihlawi, known as Shah Wali Allah, the father of 'Abd al-Aziz Dihlawi, and the writer of *al-Tuḥfat al-Athnā 'Ashriyya fi Radd al al-Shi'a*, says in his *Izālat al-Khafā'*: "There are chains of *hadith* that state that Fāṭimah, the daughter of Asad, gave birth to Ali within the Ka'ba. Ali was born on Friday the thirteenth day of the month of Rajab, thirty years after 'Āmm al-Fīl, and no one was born there before or after other than Ali."

And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for believers, though it increase the evil-doers in naught save ruin. And when We bestow Our favor upon man, he turns away and is averse, and when evil touches him he is in despair. (17:82–83)

In the *Irshād Daylamī* by Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan al-Daylamī, vol. 2 (Najaf: Intishārāt Raḍī, 1412), p. 25, the poem is related to certain poets without mentioning their names. And before that, what our master, al-Imam, had said concerning the Ascension of the Prophet is mentioned.

[46] Ali is not the first to be born of two Hāshemites, since he had an older brother of the same parents. This has been corrected in the translation. Ali's birth within the Ka'ba, poems about him, and Sunni and Shi'i *hadith* are mentioned in detail in *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 6, pp.21–38.

[47] *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 12. Ibn Athir says: "He was the first new born of Hāshemites, that is, both his father and mother were Hāshemites." See *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 16.

[48] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 13, narrated from *Āmilī* by Shaykh Ṭūsi.

[49] *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 12, and *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 13. Both are related in a Sunni chain in *al-Manāghib* by Ibn Mughāzili Shāfi'i, edition 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1424 AH).

[50] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 255.

[51] Shaykh Ḥurr al-Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a* (Qum: Mu'assisat Āl al-Bayt, 1409 AH), vol. 14, p. 233.

[52] *al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb*, vol. 1, p. 322; *Rayḥānat al-Adab*, (vol. 7, p. 280), from Abu al-Mu'ayyid Muhammad ibn Muhammad 'Antari, the author of *Qarābēdin*, who was of the great philosophers and scholars, and a well-known physician and orator of the sixth century:

O my son, remember my advice and act upon it,
For the essence of the knowledge of medicine is my plain word;
Take a step and cure the patient from his illness,
And bring his strength back to him in time;
Do grow and become younger, save your present health,
You know that the opposite of that is ailing.
Let your conflicts decrease as much as you can,
For the water of life is amniotic, issuing from the loins.
Plan your meals to have just once a day,
And avoid eating before digesting the former food.
Do not consider the illness so humbly;
It is like fire, and its virtue is burning.
Do not misplace sickness as a distinction of yours;
The chime causes one to find appetite.
The fever is an aid that assists nature,
Healing from illness and pain.
Do not drink so soon after eating your food,
And do not eat after so much drink,
And take medicine when you look pale.
At puberty and when having excessive desire,
And when the nature of a medicine is realized,
The problem is solved and the illness is cured.

Then he has said: "Some of the translators have narrated these poems of seventy lines to Ibn Butlān. However, in the *Nāmey-e Dāneshwarān* it is narrated from Khazraji that this poem is from Abul Mu'ayyid, and is in the book of *Nūr al-Mujtabā*."

[53] Ḥāfiz Ali ibn Abībakr Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawā'id* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub 'Ilmiyyah, 1408 AH), vol. 8, p. 225.

[54] Muhammad ibn Ṭalḥah Shāfi'i, *Maṭālib al-Su'ūl fi Manāqib Āl al-Rasūl*, edition 1 (Beirut: Mu'assat al-Balāgh, 1419 AH), p. 11.

[55] *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 14.

[56] The majority of Shi'ite scholars believe that Ali was ten years old when the Prophet received the first Revelation.

[57] Muhammad ibn Jarir Ṭabari, *Tārikh al-Ṭabari*, edition 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth, 1387 AH), vol. 2, p. 57, has related from Ibn Isḥāq that he said,

آمن به رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله معه و صدقه بما جاه به من عند الله على بن أبى طالب. و هو يومئذ ابن عشر سنين وكان مما انعم الله به على بن أبى طالب انه كان فى حجر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله قبل الاسلام.

Ibn Athir, in *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, on page 16, says that according to a majority of Sunni *'ulamā*, Ali was the first person to embrace Islam. Also in *Ghāyat al-Marām*, page 499, there are 18 *hadith* from Sunni books on the matter. On page 504, he gives 18 *hadith* from Shi'a sources.

[58] *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaqq wa Izhāq al-Bāṭil*, Qāḍi Nūri al-Dīn Shūshtarī (Qum: Maktabat Ayatollah Mar'ashi, 1409), p. 70.

[59] This poem is narrated in *Maṭālib al-Su'ūl*, p. 11 and *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 75.

[60] Imam Ali, Sayyid Raḍī edition, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, edition 1 (Qum: Intishārāt Hijrat, 1414 AH), vol. 1, p. 393.

[61] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *al-Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 382.

[62] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 11, p. 113.

[63] *al-Mizān*, vol. 2, p. 140.

[64] *Tārikh al-Ṭabari*, vol. 2, p. 55.

[65] *Tārikh al-Ṭabari*, vol. 2, p. 56. In *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 60, this *hadith* is narrated from Ibn Mājeh Ghazvini, Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Na'im Hāfiz, Tha'labī and Ḥamwīnī.

[66] Ibid.

[67] *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 14; *Maṭālib al-Su'ūl*, p. 11; *Tārikh al-Ṭabari*, vol. 2, p. 58.

[68] *Tārikh al-Ṭabari*, vol. 2, p. 56; *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 16; *Maṭālib al-Su'ūl*, p. 11.

[69] *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 2, p. 278.

[70] Sayyid Ismā'il Ḥimyari in his *Collection of Poems*, p. 73, says:

ابو حسن غلام من قريش ابرهم واكرمهم نصابا

دعاهم احمد لما اتته من الله النبوة فاستجابا

فاديه وعلمه واملى عليه الوحى يكتبه كتابا

فاحصى كلما املى عليه وبينه له بابا فبابا

This poem is extracted from *A'yān al-Shī'a*, vol. 12, p. 216. Ḥimyari also composed thirteen lines about the event from page 203 onwards.

[71] *Tārikh al-Ṭabari*, vol. 2, p. 63.

[72] See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid, vol. 3, p. 263; in *al-Murāji'āt* (p. 111), Allāmah Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Āmuli, after an explanation from *Nahj al-Balāghah*, in his annotation says: "The *Naqḍ al-Othmāniyyah* is a rare book, and it is incumbent upon everyone to search it for what he needs." (See vol. 3, p. 257 and pp. 281–286 in the final part of the "Sermon of Qāsi'ah").

[73] Vol. 6, p. 396.

[74] Vol. 1, p. 111.

[75] *al-Ghadir*, vol. 2, pp. 279–280.

[76] *al-Ghadir* II, p. 287.

[77] Translated into Fārsi by Shirāziān Mirzā Ibrāhim Khān. See p. 60.

[78] Narrated from *Shi'a Islam* by Sibṭ, part 1, pp. 5–6.

[79] Abul Faraj Ḥalabi Shāfi'i, *Sirat al-Ḥalabiyya*, edition 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub 'Ilmiyyah, 1427 AH), vol. 1, p. 312.

[80] Vol. 19, p. 74.

[81] Vol. 3, p. 40.

[82] Vol. 3, p. 351.

[83] See p. 104.

[84] In *Ali wa al-Waṣiyya* (4–19) there are many *hadith* which are mentioned in different ways by means of authentic documents, as well as extracts from the books of scholars. He also give sources of these documents in detail, and under the title "The Four Hadith" he relates a strange *hadith* from Abū Bakr to Abbās ibn 'Abdu al-Muṭṭalib in which Abū Bakr says:

> When the Prophet (s) called all the members of the clan together, he stated:
>
> فمن يقوم منكم يابعني على ان يكون اخي ووزيري ووصيي وخليفتي في اهلي، فلم يقم.

He also relates a similar *hadith* on p. 375. The above-mentioned *hadith* is narrated from Ibn al-'Asākir's manuscript on history. (A photograph of this manuscript is in the library of al-Imam Amir al-Mu'minin in Najaf.) See also *al-Manāqib*, Ibn Shahr Āshūb, vol. 1, p. 544.

[85] Shaykh Muhammad Javād Mughniyah in *al-Shi'a wa al-Tashayyu* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Madrasa wa Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnāni, n.d., p. 14), says that Shaykh Muhammad Ḥassan Muzaffar in his book *Dalā'il al-Ṣidq* (vol. 2, p. 233), from the book of *Kanzal al-'Ummāl* (vol. 6, p. 397), relates that: "The Prophet (s) said to his clan: 'I have indeed brought you benevolence to this world and the Hereafter, and God enjoined me to invite you to that. So which of you is going to support me in this affair?' Ali said: 'O, the Prophet (s), I am going to be your Minister.' So the Prophet (s) held him by his arm and said: 'He is indeed my executor, my caliph among you; so listen to him and carry out whatever he says!' Then the people present began laughing and saying to Abī Ṭālib: 'Certainly, you must listen to your son and follow him.'" See also annotation of *A'yān al-Shī'a* (vol. 1, p. 114 ff.).

[86] See *al-Ghadir*, vol. 2, pp. 287–289.

[87] It is worthwhile to mention that in this *hadith*, he was not only nominated as the Imam and a leader after his demise, but also in his lifetime. This is because he has stated: "So listen to him and follow him." These kinds of phrases prove the necessity of listening to and following the Imam in the

time of the Prophet, and they confirm the infallibility of the Imam, because there is a relationship between infallibility and the need to be followed. And the Prophet has said that Ali was to him as Aaron to Moses, except that there was no Messenger after him. (See also Allāmah Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Āmuli, *al-Naṣṣ wa al-Ijtihād* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahj), 2nd edition, p. 376.

[88] See *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid, vol. 2, p. 119 and vol. 1, p. 134; Ibn Qutaybah Dinwari, *al-Imāmat and al-Siyāsat* (Beirut: Dār al-Azwa',1410 AH), vol. 1, p. 113.

[89] *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 2, p. 20; Abū al-Fidā, vol. 1, p. 156; Ibn 'Abd'arbeh, *'Iqd al-Farīd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1404), vol. 3, p. 64.

[90] *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, p. 131, quoted from the book of *al-Saqifah*.

[91] This of course was his deception. See *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, p. 130.

[92] *al-Imāmat wa al-Siyāsat*, vol. 1, p. 13.

[93] This elegy is mentioned in Ḥimyari's Divān, and they have written the original version from *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 2, p. 250; *A'yān al-Shi'a*, vol. 12, p. 268; *al-Manāqib*, vol. 2, pp. 26–177; and vol. 3, 55.

[94] Ḥimyari, *Divān*, 43, p. 6 quoted from *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 2, p. 251 and *al-Manāqib*, vol. 2, pp. 26 and 318.

[95] Shaykh Muhammad Javād Mughniyah in *al-Shi'a wa Tashayyu'* (pp. 37-38), states: "Infallibility is a power that guides a man against sin in such a way that he does not leave the incumbent and follows him, and never commits any sin. Otherwise there is no reward for him. In other words, by his piety, the infallible has reached a lofty position where lust and passion can never overpower him, and he has achieved such knowledge in the religion and its rules and commands that he never thinks of committing sin."

In an annotation, he says: "The Imam describes himself as follows: 'It did not happen that the Prophet (s) found any falsehood in my words or any mistake in my actions, and I sincerely followed him as a child follows his mother. He always raised me upwards through his moral attitudes, and he commanded me to follow him. This is the real meaning of the infallibility in the Shi'a creed: there is neither falsehood in one's speech nor mistakes in one's actions.'"

[96] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 53.

[97] *Sirat al-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 3, p. 400.

[98] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 234.

[99] Ibid., p. 235.

[100] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 256.

[101] Ibid., p. 239.

[102] This *hadith* is also narrated in *Biḥār-al-Anwār*, vol. 38, p. 9. It is summarized from *Kashf-al-Ghammah fi Ma'rifat al-A'immah* by Muhaddith

Ardabili (Tabriz: 1410 AH), from *al-Manāqib* by Khārazmī. Shaykh Ṭūsi in his *al-Amāli* has narrated this *hadith* as follows:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله يا علي خلق الله الناس من اشجار شتى و خلقني و انت من شجرة واحدة انا اصلها و انت فرعها فطوبى لمن تمسك باصلها و اكل من فرعها ؛

Biḥār-al-Anwār, vol. 35, p. 35, has narrated this *hadith* from *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* as follows:

الناس من اشجار شتى و انا و انت من شجرة واحدة.

[103] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 256.

[104] *Tārikh al-Ya'qūbi*, vol. 2, p. 36.

[105] Ibid., p. 80.

[106] The first group of his supporters in Medina are known by this name.

[107] *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 18.

[108] *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 19.

[109] This *hadith* has also been narrated in *Tārikh al-Ya'qūbi*, vol. 1, p. 39. The *hadith* also has been narrated by the following chain as well: *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 92; *Sibt ibn al-Juzi, Tadhkirah al-Kawās*, p. 21; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p. 25; and Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, p. 33.

[110] *Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ*, p. 21.

[111] *Divān al-Ḥimyari*, p. 93, and from this page up to p. 100 he has mentioned good information about this issue.

[112] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 348.

[113] Ibid.

[114] *Tadhkirah al-Khawās*, p, 26.

[115] This *hadith* is narrated in Ibrahim Isfahāni, *Ḥilyat al-Auliyā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub Arabi, 1387 AH), p. 63; *Maṭālib al-Su'ūl*, p. 21, and also in *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 16. However, Ibn Shāzān narrated it through his chain from Anas a little differently, and he added at the bottom of the page that Imam Ali stated that the Prophet said,

انت مني تؤدي عني، وتؤدي ديني، وتبلغ رسالاتي، فقال علي عليه السلام يا رسول الله: اما انت تبلغ الرسالة قال: بلى ولكن تعلم الناس من بعدي تاويل القرآن مالا يعلمون وتخبرهم بذلك

[116] See *al-Manāqib*.

[117] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 134.

[118] Ibid., p. 135.

[119] *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol 1, p. 175.

[120] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 183–185.

[121] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 85.

[122] Ibid., p. 83.

[123] Ibid., p, 84.

[124] Thus it is recommended when one begins the prayer that one recites:

اللهم رب هذه الدعوة التامة والصلوة القائمة بلغ محمدا صلى الله عليه وآله الدرجة والوسيلة والفضل والفضيل

[125] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 84. Shaykh al- Kulayni has also mentioned some of this *hadith*, which is altogether two thirds of it, in Kulayni, *Rawḍat al-Kāfi*, ed. Ali Akbar Muttaqī (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al- Islami, 1407 AH), pp. 24–25.

[126] *al-Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 374.

[127] Ḥimyari, *Divān*, p. 252. This poem was originally narrated in *A'yān al-Shī'a*, vol. 12, p. 242, and *al-Manāqib*, vol. 2, pp. 159, 194, 233, and 288; vol. 3, pp. 90–91.

[128] Ḥimyari, *Divān*, p. 399, narrated from *A'yān al-Shī'a; al-Manāqib.*

[129] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *al-Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 349.

[130] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 86.

[131] *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4, p.23.

[132] *al-Ṣawā'q al-Muḥriqah*, p, 78; *al-Manāqib*, p. 222.

[133] Fayḍ Kashāni, *Tafsir al-Ṣāfi*, edition 2 (Tehran: Intishārāt Ṣadrā, 1415 AH), vol. 1, p. 55.

[134] Faḍl ibn Ḥasan Ṭabarsi, *Majma' al-Bayān*, edition 3 (Tehran: Intishārāt Naser Khosro, 1372), vol. 3, p. 525.

[135] *al-Ṣawā'q al-Muḥriqa*, p.78.

[136] Ahmad ibn 'Abdullāh Ṭabari, *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā* (Cairo: Maktab al-Qudsi, 1356 AH), p. 71.

[137] *al-Manāqib*, p. 222.

[138] *The Position of Imam, the Master of the Faithful*, p. 6.

[139] Vol. 2, p. 39.

[140] *al-Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 346.

[141] *al-Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 346.

[142] Ibid.

[143] "O Ḥārr, O Ḥārr" is proclaimed, and this well-known and most correct word remains true to its last letter, whereas most people move the accent of the last letter to the letter prior to it.

With regard to the word *ghabala*: There are other possibilities in recording the word "first," although they are unsuitable in the context of our discussion. In my opinion, the letter ل must have an "a" sound, and the ب an "e" sound to be correct, because one of the meanings of *ghabala* or

ghabila is that "the eyes squint," as when either of the two eyes looks at the other. In the common language this means that the eyes "squint." The result is that one sees a single thing double. By seeing a single thing double one becomes selfish, that is, the eyes always try to see each other. This is a sign of hypocrisy, and Imam Ali has called it one of the attributes of hypocrisy.

And it has been given in the phrase "I saw him already," meaning "I encountered him with my eyes." Therefore, this phrase may appear with the sound "o" with the letter ى in Arabic; that is: "Whoever dies will see me with his eyes." This is also acceptable, and perhaps better than the previous example. For example, it is said in Arabic: "I saw him already, before, previously" and so on. Therefore, Ḥimyari's poem can be read in five different ways.

[144] In *al-Manāqib* by Ibn Shahr Āshūb, this has been written as *bina'tihi*.

[145] Ḥimyari's *Divān*, p. 325, as narrated from *A'yān al-Shi'a*, vol. 21, p, 263; *Kashf al-Ghummah*, p. 124; *al-Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 237; *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, p. 299.

[146] Annotation on Ḥimyari's *Divān*, p. 326.

[147] Ibid., p. 327.

[148] Ibid., p. 212.

[149] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 1, p. 26.

[150] *Zakhā'ir al-Uqbā*, p. 91.

[151] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 130.

[152] Ibid., p. 132.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid.

[158] *al-Manāqib*, vol. 2, p. 350.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ḥimyari, *Divān*, p. 464, extracted from *al-Manāqib*, vol. 2, pp, 162 and 223.

[161] Ḥimyari, *Divān*, p. 261, taken from *Majālis al-Mu'minin* and *A'yān al-Shi'a*.

[162] *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 2, *hadith* nos. 1130, 201; *Wasā'l al-Shi'a*, vol. 18, p. 52.

[163] *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 3, p. 53.

[164] Muhammad ibn Nu'mān Aḥwal was one of the sincere companions of Imam Ṣādiq. He used to have a shop under an arch, and was known as "the arch of believers." Because of his mastery of dialogue, his enemies called him "the arch of the devil."

[165] *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 174.

[166] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, pp. 52–53.

[167] Ibid., p. 53.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid., p.54.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

[173] *al-Mizān*, vol. 1, p. 282.

[174] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, pp. 539-540.

[175] Three mentioned *hadith* are in *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, pp. 93 and 94.

[176] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 91.

[177] In *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p.82: "I heard the Prophet (s) say:
تكون من بعدي فتنة فاذا كان ذلك فالزموا علي بن أبي طالب، فانه اول من آمن بي، و اول من يصافحني يوم القيمة، و هو الصديق الاكبر، و هو فاروق هذه الامة، و هو يعسوب المؤمنين، و المال يعسوب المنافقين".

In *al-Isāba* by Abū Laylā al-Ghaffāri, this *hadith* is narrated slightly differently.

[178] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 541. In *'Alī wa al-Waṣiyyah*, the author has included various *hadith* concerning Ali, such as "Ali is with the Right and the Qur'an, and the Right is with him." pp. 61–65.

[179] Mas'ūdi has related this *hadith* in *Murūj al-Dhihab*, vol. 2, p. 302.

[180] *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 2, p. 299.

[181] *al-Mizān*, vol. 1, p. 277. Qāḍi Nūr Allah has reasoned with a similar argument in *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaqq* (vol. 2, p. 396), but expressed it differently.

[182] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 246.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid., 247.

[186] Ibid.

[187] *Yanābī' al-Mawaddah*, p. 256. See also al-Ghadīr's narration from *Mawaddah al-Qurbā*, vol. 2, p. 51.

[188] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p.16.

[189] Ibid.

[190] *See al-Ghadīr*, vol. 5, p. 368. The author narrated this *hadith* from *al-Ṣawā'q al-Muḥriqa*, p. 30.

[191] *Tārikh al-Ya'qūbi*, vol. 2, p. 127 and *Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 2, p. 8. In the latter there is also added: ان لي شيطاناً يعتريني فاياكم و اياي اذا غضبت لا اوثر لي اشعاركم و ابشاركم and this in the *Encyclopedia* of Farīd Vajdi, vol. 2, p. 300.

[192] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sirah*, vol. 4, p. 1075.

[193] *Tārikh Ṭabari*, vol. 2, p. 460; also, Qāḍi 'Abdul Jabbār in *al-Mughni*, Ibn Taymiyyah in the *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, Muḥib al-Dīn Ṭabari in *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍarah*, Suyūṭī in the *Tārikh al-Khulafā*, Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Ṣawāiq al-Muhriqah*, and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid in the *Sharh Nahj al-Balāqah* have discussed this matter.

[194] *Murūj al-Dhihab*, vol. 2, p. 308. In *Tārikh al-Tabari*, vol. 2, p. 619, it is rendered: فـاوددت انی لم اکشف بیت فاطمه عن شیئی و ان کانوا قد غلقوه علی الحرب....

[195] One of the things that Abū Bakr regrets most is the killing of Faja' Sulami by burning him to ashes. As narrated by Ibn Athir Jazari in *al-Kāmil fi al-Tārikh*, once Ayās ibn 'Abd Yālayl Salami went to Abū Bakr and said: "Let me have arms to fight those who reject the religion." Abū Bakr armed him and assigned him a certain duty. However, he did the opposite of what Abū Bakr had ordered him and fought the Muslims instead. Abū Bakr sent Ṭarifat ibn Hājiz to capture him and bring him back, which he did. Abū Bakr ordered his men to tie up his hands and feet and cast him into the fire they had made on the outskirts of the mosque of the town.

When close to his death, Abū Bakr said: "When they brought him to me, I wish I had not burned him, that I might kill him with an iron bar or otherwise free him."

[196] See *al-Amwāl*, p. 131.

[197] This narration has already been related from *Ghāyat al-Marām*. In section 12, the narration concerning the priority and virtue of Ali has been mentioned.

[198] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 298.

[199] Ibid. p. 299.

[200] Ibn 'Abd Raba al-Andulūsi, *Mustatrafāt al-Sarā'ir*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1404 AH), p. 21.

[201] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 516.

[202] Ibid., p. 518 and 617.

[203] Ibid., p. 120.

[204] Ibid., p. 524.

[205] Ibid., p. 528.

[206] Ibid., p. 530.

[207] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 531; Sharif Askari in *Maqām Imam Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ind al-Khulafā*, p. 87, says: "According to that which has been mentioned: In the case of the woman who was to give birth to a child in six months and 'Umar had commanded to be stoned to death, Ali avoided it. They asked the reason and he answered: اللهم لا تبقنی لمعضلة لیس لها ابن ابی طالب He has related the same story in *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 3, p. 53, and Mawlā Ali Muttaqī has

interpreted it as: اللهم لا تنزل بي شدة الا و ابو الحسن الى جنبي. In the *Dhakhā'ir al-Uqbā*, p. 82, there is: اللهم لا تنزلن بي شديدة الا و ابو الحسن الى جنبي."

[208] *Ghāyat al-Marām*, p. 535.

[209] Ibid., p. 539.

[210] The book is by Mirzā Najm al-Dīn Sharif 'Askarī, one of the great scholars of Sāmirrā, and a distant cousin of the writer of this present book. His father is Ayatullah Mirzā Muhammad Tehrani, the author of *Mustadrak al-Biḥār*. This cousin was one the great scholars of Sāmirrā and the student of Ayatullah Mirzā Muhammad Hasan Shirazi.

[211] *Maqām Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ind al-Khulafā*, p. 29.

[212] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1410), p. 242.

[213] Muhammad ibn Sa'd Basri, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 244.

[214] For a brief description of Ayatullah Muhammad Ṣādiq Ṭihrānī's activities against Riḍā Shah's government, see 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī: *Waẓifa-yi Fard-i Musalmān dar Iḥyā'-i Ḥukūmat-i Islām*, compiled and edited by Muhsin Sa'īdian (Tehran), 1410 A.H. (1989 C.E.). For an account of the scholars' reaction to Riḍā Shah's government and his policies, see Mohammad H. Faghfoory, "Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19 (November 1987), pp. 413–432; and "The Impact of Modernisation on the Ulama in Iran: 1925–1941," in *Journal of Iranian Studies*, 26:3–4 (Summer–Fall 1993), pp. 277–312.

[215] For a short biography of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī in English, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr's introduction to Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *Shi'ite Islam*, translated from the Persian (Albany: State University of New York Press), 1975. For his biography in Persian, see 'Allāmah Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḥusayni Ṭihrānī Mihr-i Tābān (Mashhad: University of Mashhad Press, 1417 A.H./1996).

[216] Ibid.

[217] *Rūḥ-i Mujarrad* (*The detatched Spirit*), p. 22

[218] *Rūḥ-i Mujarrad* (*The Detatched Spirit*), p. 22

[219] *Lubb al-Lubāb dar Sayr wa Sulūk-i Ulū al-Albāb* (*Kernel of the Kernel Concerning the Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey of the People of Intellect*), (State University of New York Press, pp. xxii-xxx, Translated by Mohammad H. Faghfoory.

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